



Rational Faith in **GOD**

175

Authored by :

(Late) Pt. Bahadur Mah, M.A.

**Professor of Philosophy
D.A.V. College, Lahore**

Edited by :

M. Gopal Swami Saraswati

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Presented to

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Authored by :

**(Late) Pt. Bahadur Mal, M.A.,
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An Apology

Vedic Swadhyaya Kendra, Bareilly set up by Matushri Dhandevi Keshavram Dharmarth Vedic Trust (Regd.) (housing more than 3,500 books, all pertaining to Aarsh Vedic Literature) got a book RATIONAL FAITH IN GOD donated by the settler of the Trust, who it seems, had purchased it in secondhand condition from some old books vendor, probably in 1970s. From the title page of the book, it appeared that the book was one of the earliest publications of "Arya Pradeshik Pratinidhi Sabha, Punjab, Sindh and Balochistan, Lahore" of the then undivided India. It was authored by Pt. Bahadur Mal, M.A., Professor of Philosophy, D.A.V. College, Lahore, and was printed at Virjanand Press, Lahore. The book, being more than 85 years old, was now in a totally dilapidated condition. It was accordingly decided to replace the book by having its latest edition, but, alas, no organisation had such a title in its publications!

Finding no other way, the Trust then decided to have the book re-printed under the personal supervision of Arya Sanyasi Mahatma Gopal Swami Saraswati as a mark of respect, homage and memorium to (Late) Pt. Bahadur Mal, M.A., Professor of Philosophy of erstwhile D.A.V. College, Lahore.

With the kind co-operation of Shri Vijay Kumar Jha of Bhagwati Laser Prints, 46/5, Community Centre, East of Kailash, New Delhi-110 065, the Trust feels happy that the re-printed version of the Book is now in your hands. It is hoped, that it would continue to serve as Beacon Light in matters relating to Philosophy and Metaphysics to coming generation same way, it had served in its glorious past.

—Publishers

Editorial Note

I feel very much privileged to be associated with editing of this book 'RATIONAL FAITH IN GOD' authored by (Late) Pt. Bahadur Mal, M.A., Professor of Philosophy in erstwhile D.A.V. College, Lahore.

2. The Book fulfils the intellectual need of the entire intelligentsia world over that why should we have faith in Almighty God, and if so, on what grounds? It very beautifully comments on almost all western and Indian theories in relation to God from Atheism of Chārvāk philosophy to Darwin's Theory of Evolution; from philosophy of Pantheism or Adwaitvad propounded by Shankaracharya to the philosophy of Trinitarianism on Traitvad (viz., God, Souls and Matter) propounded so ably by Maharshi Swami Dayananda Saraswati in the 19th century.

3. The book also discusses the problem of evil (leading to pains and sorrows) as also the law of 'Karma' which is the cardinal law of Vedic Philosophy. After having established firmly on logical grounds, the concepts of God and Godhood, the book discusses in a most convincing manner, the attributes of God, thereby cementing the reader's faith in God, backed by rationality, logic and reasoning.

4. Since the essence of pudding is in its eating, the rational faith in God must lead to realization of God for which, the canons of God worship (viz., Stuti, Prarthana Upāsana) coupled with *Yogābhyās* have been discussed, denouncing at the same time perverted forms of worship.

like idol or human worship.

5. I must say, I have thoroughly enjoyed and benefited a lot while editing the book. To my readers. I would like to assure that the book is totally a faithful re-production of the original text authored by the learned Professor. Only printers' devils and spelling mistakes have been corrected. Everything, and for that matter, every chapter and every line is the same as it was in the original printed book.

6. I am sure, the readers would enjoy reading the book and benefit from it a lot.

7. Thanks to the publishers and printers for giving me the opportunity to go through the book before presenting it to the public.

May God bless all of us,

Maharshi Dayananda
Nirwan Diwas
Deepawali
21st October, 2006

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Rational Faith in God

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Chapter - 1

INTRODUCTION

FINITE beings as we are, we are surrounded by infinity on all sides. It may sound strange, but it is nevertheless true that man is an admixture of the finite and the infinite. His powers are finite, but, he has longings for the infinite. This world of limitations, in which he finds best for the time being, soon begins to grow wearisome and he pushes onward to find a resting place for his aching heart in some transcendental region where the puzzles of life are solved and abiding satisfaction found.

Intellectual need—“*Life is a mystery*”, such is the verdict of the wisemen of all countries and of all ages. The wisdom of most men is confined to acknowledging the fact that life is a mystery; they do not think it worth while to penetrate through the hazy veil to reach the beautiful vision of truth and reality that lies enshrouded within. There are, however, in every age certain gifted individuals who make efforts to understand the world in which they live. The need which urges them on, is both intellectual and moral. The intellect of man is concerned with discovering systematic connections in otherwise disparate phenomena. Man is a system making and order-seeking animal. All the natural sciences, that have made such a wonderful progress in modern time, are the direct outcome of the intellectual quest for order and harmony in the workings of nature.

The natural sciences however, are unable individually to cope with experience as a whole. Nature in its collective

aspect, is too big to be tackled successfully by any particular science: Every science picks out for its purposes one aspect of the total experience leaving the other aspects to be studied by other sciences. The science of Botany studies plants only, and does not concern itself with celestial bodies, which are the subject matter of Astronomy, or with matter and force, which fall within the jurisdiction of the science of Physics. It is apparent that these sciences deal with particular groups of order and harmony and not with order as a whole. The subject matters of different sciences, however, are not disconnected. There are no hard and fast lines of cleavage between them. These smaller systems form part of a bigger system—a system which embraces reality as a whole. *It is the work of philosophy to try, to obtain a systematic understanding of reality as a whole.*

I have said above, that sciences have for their object the discovering of order and system in the mass of natural occurrences. They trace causal connections between facts. They have succeeded wonderfully in this task of theirs. They have demonstrated the presence of order and harmony in most obscure regions of nature. It is no wonder, they are in a mood of exultation. They deserve the glory and the triumph that hail them from all sides. They have proved with scientific precision that nature is not a mere haphazard collocation of atoms and molecules. In both organic and inorganic nature there is a wonderful adaptation of parts with one another. Let us not be hasty to conclude that the light of scientific knowledge has illumined every nook and corner of the Universe. Much has been done and most remains to be done. There are many obscurities, many dark regions that have yet to be explored; still the result obtained so far are extremely satisfactory and full of promise that those recalcitrant forces of nature which are still withholding their secrets will soon have to eat an humble pie before the triumphant march of

science.

After science has done so much to establish the presence of order and harmony, is it altogether unscientific and irrational to go further and demand an explanation of the utilities and the harmonious workings of natural phenomena? I do not mean to suggest that this desire to know the why and wherefore has followed in the wake of scientific illumination. The desire is as old as the world itself. From the very ancient times, men have been putting these questions, and, I do not think there would ever come a time when these questions would lose their interest for the people of those times.

What is the origin of the universe and what is the end towards which it is moving? Is there any all knowing intelligence behind this system or is there any other way possible to account for harmony and design that are so abundantly manifest in the universe? What happens after death? These are some of the doubts that have assailed mankind in the past and will continue to flutter in the breasts of coming generations as well.

My point is that the development of science instead of dissolving these doubts or proving their superfluity has only whetted the appetite of the thinking portion of humanity. It has inspired them with zeal to redouble their efforts to get a satisfactory solution of the riddle of the universe.

I think it has been made clear by this time that no man can remain content with the scientific point of view only; the logic of events urges him on to face boldly the ultimate question involved in the description of natural phenomena. The stand-point of science is empirical. Science is content to describe things as they are. It finds order and harmony in nature, and faithfully records its findings for the benefit of mankind. It accepts the world, as it is, and, never cares to enquire whether there was a time when this world was not;

nor does it feel called upon to describe the final causes that have operated to make the universe what it is. No doubt there have been many scientists in the past and there are some even now, who have gone out of their way, to make excursions in the domain of Philosophy and they have always made bad philosophers. A scientist turning a philosopher is a fine spectacle indeed ! We shall have enough to do with the philosophic fulminations of some of them in the following pages and so we leave them for the present.

The religious consciousness of mankind, not satisfied with the merely scientific point of view, has sought to explain the order and harmony of the Universe, as the work of some powerful intelligence, which reduces primordial matter into a wonderful system of beautiful forms. Is it irrational or absurd, as some scientists say, to regard order and design as the mark or sign of intelligence? I am not going to open this discussion in this chapter but certainly it is neither absurd nor irrational to believe that intelligence is a very important factor without which a sufficient explanation of purposeful adaptations, and the evidences of design in nature, is not possible.

Moral need—As I have already said, the necessity of transcending the scientific point of view, for arriving at the solution of the great mystery of existence is not only, intellectual, it is also moral. Man is a moral being. There is a perpetual strife going on between the moral and the immoral parts of his nature. The Indian sages have described it as the *Devāsura Sangrāme*. He wants his moral nature to triumph over the evil propensities and headstrong passions. This task of moral cultivation is rendered difficult on account of the opposition of the inherent element of egoism or selfishness, which also forms a part of human nature. However difficult the task may be, there can be no question of the existence of lofty moral aspirations in man as man. The discrepancy

between what we are and what we aspire to be, is the chief source of that divine discontentment, which occasionally, takes away all joy from our lives and makes them practically insipid and valueless. I am only recording a bare fact when I say that man wants to be just and unselfish. He wants to universalize his affections; and is not history replete with the inspiring examples of illustrious men who have sacrificed their lives for the good of humanity or for keeping true to their convictions and beliefs?

What is the worth, it may be asked, of this self sacrifice; if the universe, of which man forms a part, is rotten at the core? I can imagine the presence, of certain refined natures in this world, who disdainfully reject the idea of being moral, because morality is paying in the end. True lovers, if such there be, do not demand any return for their selfless love. This position is conceivable but is it not strange that only man should advocate justice and benevolence, while the whole universe, (barring man of course) should stand apart and look on indifferently, while men are wearing themselves to death for establishing justice and love in this world? Do nature and man work at cross purposes? Is there no harmony whatsoever between the interests of man and the laws of nature? Is the demand of man that justice and truth should prevail in the end, an altogether meaningless demand? Should we regard all those men a set of deluded fools who heroically bear extreme hardships for the furtherance of their noble cause, believing firmly that virtue and justice cannot go in vain and would eventually triumph in the face of all obstacles and hinderances?

According to **Kant**, morality requires for its realization, the postulate of the existence of God. We are not concerned at present to prove scientifically whether the presence of God is essential to the furtherance of the cause of morality. We should at least see clearly that the moral demand for the

existence of God as the backbone and the custodian of moral and spiritual values is not after all an absurd demand.

We have found that belief in the existence of God is founded on the intellectual and moral need of man. In the case of, most men, belief in God is a necessity, without which their lives would be an empty, blank, destitute of rhythm and vitality. "I believe in God because I need "one" may satisfy a man of religious temperament, but a belief based merely upon emotional needs and practical motives cannot make any appeal to scientifically trained minds. The task of religious philosophy is not finished when it has indicated clearly that belief in God is highly useful from a practical point of view; it has to show further that it is rationally justifiable and that it can stand any amount of rational criticism.

Reason and faith—Most men are of opinion that religion is a matter of emotion, "a mere article of faith", and that reason has nothing to do with it. The existence of God can be intuitively felt but it cannot be rationally established. Human reason can deal with finite terrestrial objects only. How can you weigh the infinite in the balance of the finite? It is unnecessary for me to say that these enthusiasts are rendering a very poor service to religion, of which they seem to be so fond.

The view that intuition and not reason is the organ of religious knowledge, lends support to the opinion of Philosophers like Comte and Schopenhauer that religion is the product of dark ages, when the reason of mankind had not developed to any marked extent, or as Schopenhauer puts it metaphorically, "Religions are like glow-worms; they need the dark in order to shine."

Let us briefly examine the view that man knows God by immediate intuition and that no arguments of any kind are required to prove His existence. Let us take for granted

that a certain man has realized God intuitively. How is he to convince others of the fact that what he has perceived is not a mere hallucination? No body can dispense with the help of reason, and least of all the believer in intuition. Even science has its background in intuition or direct perception of reality. After all, the generalizations of science presuppose the solid foundation of facts and facts are not supplied by reason; they are directly obtained by sense intuition. Even a dog perceives these facts directly. These facts, however, become valuable when reason strings them into a systematic and coherent form. In the same way religious intuition remains barren and inchoate unless it is systematically and rationally interpreted by the help of reason. I shall go further and say that a man cannot understand his own intuitions unless he were to bring the light of reason to bear on them. What purpose can be served by them if they are not understood, and, if their bearing on the ultimate questions of life is not realized.

If intuition is such a sure guide to God-consciousness how it is that a large majority of mankind believe in the most absurd and monstrous doctrines about the nature of God? Why should they not all become God intoxicated without any loss of time? If intuition does not work universally and uniformly, how can any sane man pin his faith to a principle that works in an eccentric and sporadic manner?

The truth is, that the religion "*which ignores the claim of reason and moves without its guiding light is apt to fall into fanaticism and superstition.*" By laying stress on the claims of reason, I am not going to ignore altogether the importance of faith in the spiritual life of man. Reason and faith are not antagonistic to each other. Reason gives strength to faith and faith completes the work of reason. If your faith is diametrically opposed to the requirements of reason, I assure you, it is doomed to extinction sooner or later. If any

man stubbornly insists on believing a certain Dogma in direct opposition to reason, I can unhesitatingly pronounce that man to be a fanatic of the worst type. While we should look askance at faith unsupported by reason, we should in no case put up with the arrogance of reason, when it claims to be all sufficient. *Reason should naturally lead to faith: faith is to be the crowning glory of reason.* Especially in dealing with transmundane realities like God, Soul, the Origin of the Universe etc., reason must stop somewhere, short of breath, handing over its charge to the safe keeping of faith.

We must remember however that faith should assume authority only after reason has finished with its work. We shall have more to say on this difficult topic later on. In the meantime it is enough for us to know that reason should have full scope in the discussion of religious subjects. *"If philosophical reflection can make it clear that the postulates of religious consciousness are not antagonistic to those of Science and speculative thought, it would have performed a service whose value cannot be gain-said."*

In the following pages we shall try to prove that reason favours the belief in the existence of God and that this belief is not simply a matter of faith. On the other hand it is a conviction firmly, implanted on rational grounds.

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Chapter - 2

PROOFS OF THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

We found in the last chapter that faith holds a very important place in the spiritual life of man. Belief in God is based on the inner conviction that the world in which we live, is imperfect and needs a deeper reality to complete it. The proofs of, the existence of God, that we shall take up in this chapter, are so many, as a result of the attempts made by the human mind. to prove that the belief in God is not the outcome of non-rational attitude of mind. As far as, reason can go, it lends unequivocal support to the belief that God exists, for without him our life would become blank and purposeless. Most people are of opinion that these proofs do not give us strictly valid conclusions from the logical point of view. One important canon of logical reasoning is that the conclusion should not contain more than is already implied in the premises, or in other words, the inference should not include anything which is not warranted by the facts on the basis of which we draw the inference. We shall see whether the arguments stand the severe test of this logical canon. If in the end of our discusssion, we shall have indicated clearly that reasons so far as it goes (and it is no fault of reason if it cannot go further on account of its limitations) does not disprove the existence of God, and that on the other hand it presents huge probabilities in favour of the belief, our labour would be amply rewarded.

I shall try to bring together in one place nearly all the important arguments that have been advanced from time to

time in the history of religious speculation. Some of them are more convincing, others less, still they are all important in so far as they contain germs of truth, indicating clearly the various directions from which different men have started in their search after a rational demonstration of the existence of God. The universe, as it stands revealed to us, has innumerable aspects and it is no wonder if certain features, that make a strong appeal to one man, leave the other man unmoved, who, in his turn, is influenced by a different set of the outstanding features of the universe. It is on the basis of these facts or features that different arguments reach identical conclusions regarding the existence of God.

The different arguments, taken in the order of their importance are the following (1) The Ontological argument (2) The Cosmological argument (3) The Teleological argument or argument from design and to these we may also add (4) The Moral argument, or the argument from the moral consciousness of mankind. The argument from design is the most convincing of all and gives the greatest satisfaction to, a religiously inclined individual. It starts from the undeniable fact of harmony and design in the universe and scientifically and systematically traces it to a pre-existing intelligence. We shall however, not anticipate the argument at this place.

The Ontological argument has been stated differently by different philosophers but the essential contention of this argument is, that the proof of His Existence is found in the very idea of God which is quite unique. We think of him as perfect. Since nothing in this world is perfect, it follows that the idea of perfection is innate, a priori, and not the result of experience. As far as our temporal experience goes, we come across imperfect, finite, transitory and unsubstantial things. If we were dependent merely, upon experience, we could never get the idea of a perfect being who, is infinite and unconditioned. Since the notion of a perfect being is not derived from experience, it must have been, implanted in

our minds by God himself, who may be said to be the inspirer of this idea.

The very notion of a perfect being, however, carries with it necessarily the idea of existence, as the idea of triangle carries with it the idea of the equality of the sum of its angles to two right angles.

Existence forms the essential part of a perfect being. If the being whom we regard perfect, is non-existent, he is no longer perfect since he is lacking in one essential attribute—namely existence. To couple perfection with non-existence involves a contradiction in terms. If this necessary element is taken away from perfection, it ceases to be, what it claims to be. The gist of this argument, therefore, is that the notion of existence is implied in the very idea of a perfect being.

This argument was handled very roughly by Kant. According to him existence does not form any part of the content of an idea. We may have the idea of a perfect being but it does not follow that the idea must correspond to an existing fact. It is absurd to pass from idea to existence. The idea of God may involve the idea of existence, but the idea of existence is not the same thing as actual existence. A man may have the idea of hundred dollars in his pocket, but it does not follow that he actually possesses hundred dollars.

Descartes, one of the exponents of this argument was well aware of this line of reasoning, but his contention is that this criticism may be true as far other ideas are concerned, but the idea of God is unique, and, therefore, it involves existence also. You can have only one perfect being, and, if you believe that it is thoroughly justifiable to cherish the idea of a perfect being, you should not; in that case fight shy of the logical conclusion that the perfect being, if there is such, should also exist.

The weakness of this argument lies in the fact that it assumes the presence of the idea of the perfect being in human mind. The question may, be raised as to whether the

idea of a perfect being is universally present in all minds. Much depends upon the assent that may be given to this proposition. It may, however, be maintained by the supporters of this view that the notion of a perfect being is latent in all minds and that it becomes explicit or manifest under proper conditions, provided by culture, or by a certain level of mental development. The idea of perfection, latent or explicit, in one form or another is present in all human beings. Perfection however cannot hang in mid-air, it must seek embodiment in some personal, self-existent being, and that self-existent being is God, the author and governor of this universe.

The source of the vitality of the ontological argument as **Lotze** points out, should be sought elsewhere than in the cogency of its logic, "It lies in the rooted dis-inclination of the human spirit to believe that the Supreme being, who is the object of our spiritual quest, is only a fiction of the mind." Still the argument as far as it goes, is not absurd as appears at first blush. It contains a great truth, that the idea of a perfect being which is a highly conceivable idea, is not merely fictitious but has its roots firmly embedded in existence and reality.

The **Cosmological argument** is sounder in its method than the ontological argument. It does not make any assumption to being with. It starts from the given world as such and infers the existence of God from the character of the facts that it finds ready at hand in the world.

This argument assumes two forms. The first form of the argument turns upon the contingency of the world. Experience tells us that nothing in this world is permanent or self-existent. What cannot exist in its own right does presuppose some other substance as the cause of its existence. To get a clear grasp of this argument let us take a concrete illustration. I am writing on a piece of paper with pen and ink. It is clear that paper, pen and ink are not self-dependent objects; a pen cannot come into being unless certain

conditions are also assumed to exist. It presupposes the existence of a raw piece of wood, a manufacturer who gives a well defined shape to that piece of wood, some tools, which the agent makes use of, the end or purpose for which it is made and a large number of minor circumstances, which are equally necessary for the pen to come into existence. The pen, therefore cannot exist, unless these conditions also exist.

Similarly other objects such as plants, animals, rocks, water, etc. are not self-existent. They cannot be what they are, without the presence of certain antecedent, and concomitant circumstances that are necessary to the existence of these objects. This line of reasoning can be extended to all the objects of the world. They are all ephemeral, subject to change, and for that reason they require for their very existence a self sufficient principle, which may be regarded as the ultimate ground of nature with all its differentiations.

Since the world as it exists is made up of contingent ephemeral, evanescent objects, that do not exist in their own right, we are led irresistibly to an infinite, necessary self existent substance, which is the eternal condition of the appearance of changes in the universe. The argument simply says that we require a ground, or grounds which should explain the appearance of changes, as well as the existence of objects in which the changes appear. It does not definitely commit itself to the position that the ground of the universe is a single principal which evolves out of itself and creates not simply the changes but also the substances, that change. As a matter of fact we may have more than one self-existent principle. What the argument asserts is. that one of these self-existent principles should be such as to give direction to as well as produce the requisite change in the given materials, so that a well ordered harmonious evolution of nature may become practicable. If there is only one necessary changeless, self existent principle, how is it possible to derive from it this contingent world of changing objects. To explain

the phenomena of change we shall, have to posit one other eternal principle in which the changes can appear.

The second form of the argument makes use of the notion of causality in proving the existence, of God. One of the most important postulates of Science is the law of causation. "Every event has a fixed cause" is a tacit assumption underlying all scientific investigations. In the world of our experience effects or events are always conditioned by causes and these in turn are the effects of other causes. So the chain of causality runs back step by step. We cannot, however, go on infinitely tracing effects to causes without coming to a point in the series, which we may designate as the first cause or the unconditioned, self existent cause. Certain objections can be urged against this view. In the first place there are as good reasons for believing that the series of causes is prolonged indefinitely as that it ends in a first cause. There is no evidence what-so-ever to put an arbitrary limit at some point in the series and to assert that it comes to its natural termination at that point.

In the second place if you keep entirely to the scientific notion of causality, the cause, which is the antecedent circumstance of the effect, is of the same nature as the effect, though appearing in a different form. If the effect is physical, the cause also must be physical. The law of causation—namely that "every event must have a cause" can by no stretch of imagination be interpreted to mean, that a physical effect can be brought about by a purely spiritual cause.

However far back, you may trace the changes occurring in the physical world, you cannot in any conceivable way, annihilate matter altogether, and regard it as originating from a cause which is immaterial. You may go as far as you like, you cannot get rid of matter. It is the irreducible minimum without which the phenomenon of causation cannot be conceived to take place. Therefore in place of one first cause, we shall have to believe in a plurality of first causes. This

objection is generally made against the Christian view of Thiesm, according to which God is the only first cause and the material world emanates from Him. There is no scientifically conceivable way of deriving Matter out of God, the two being diametrically opposed to each other in respect of their attributes. By no device of intellectual jugglery, can spirit be made to yield matter. This objection, however, loses its force if we regard matter as co-eternal, with God, and as providing the material condition for God to work upon. In the words of **Martin**, God, cannot create the world "out of the unit of itself."

Matter, however, taken alone, cannot initiate changes. Change is always the result of the operation of force at some point in matter. In the view of some Scientists, therefore, matter and force taken together, are sufficient to explain all the phenomena of nature. Matter is inert, force works upon it in various ways, and thus the world of changing objects comes into existence.

According to the theory of the conservation of energy, the quantity of force in the universe is fixed, which can be neither increased nor decreased. All that we can do is to transform energy from one form into another. Heat, motion, light, electricity, etc. are so many forms of energy and transformation can take place among these different forms. For instance, the rapid movement of the wheels of machinery, gives rise to electricity and the electricity, thus generated can be changed into light, or movement or heat, etc.

Matter and force must be co-eternal, force resides in matter, therefore it cannot precede matter in point of time. Nor can it be the effect of matter, for no effect can appear without the operation of force which should be always there.

According to this view then, the phenomena of causation are ultimately due to force or energy. It is not only true in the case of inanimate nature, but the law of the conservation of energy holds good even when we come to conscious

individuals. Even mind cannot produce or originate force. It can simply redirect the force, already present in the human organism. This force is obtained from the assimilation of food in the system and when the force already generated in the system becomes exhausted, we feel the necessity of further assimilation of food for the extraction of the requisite amount of energy for our daily use. On the basis of these facts Mill comes to the conclusion that "in the only sense in which experience supports in any shape the Doctrine of a first cause *i.e.*, the primeval and universal element in all causes, the first cause can be no other than force."

But Mill has not made clear, and, in fact no materialistic writer has yet succeeded in clearly indicating how force which is "the primeval and universal element in all causes" can direct itself without the help of intelligence. In the case of human organism, we have found that mind, though it cannot create new energy can at least direct it to new purposes. Undirected force may lead an individual to destruction. If direction of force is necessary for the maintenance of human body one cannot understand how the colossal forces of nature, when left to themselves, unregulated by intelligence, can produce that order and harmony which we find around us. in the universe.

The argument of Mill presents insuperable difficulties if we believe that God is the creator, of matter and force. It is inconcievable: how God can create matter out of himself. We shall take up this view, more at length in some other chapter. In the meantime, if we believe and this belief is supported by facts that matter (which also includes force) and God are co-eternal, no such difficultes can come in the, way and the cosmological argument becomes almost unanswerable.

The second form of this argument can be summarised as follows. Every event has a cause. Whenever any cause works, force is invariably exerted upon matter. So this force

may be regarded as the universal and primeval element present in all cases of causation, but force is not the all sufficient cause of any phenomenon, unless force is directed by an intelligence, it cannot produce the requisite effect and since the world is a big aggregate of events or phenomena, it requires a supreme intelligence for its being brought into manifestation.

We must however clearly recognise the limitations of this argument. It infers the existence of God from the facts of the finite limited world; hence there is nothing in the argument to prove that the God, thus inferred is infinite and omnipotent in its nature. According to the canon of logical reasoning our conclusion cannot contain more than is warranted by the premises. We start with a finite limited world and we can only infer a finite intelligence as the efficient cause of this universe. The argument as it stands does not positively assert that the God of the universe, is infinite nor does it positively deny the statement. For that we shall have to scrutinize, other sources of evidences. We should however wait till we reach the chapter on the attributes of God.

The Teleological Argument—This argument from design, which Mill calls “the most scientific argument” takes its stand upon purposiveness and order, which we find in the world. Whenever we find order, we naturally conclude, that there is intelligence behind it. The presence of order and harmony is the index of intelligence. When we talk of design”, however, we do not mean thereby simply the suitability of a certain process to lead to any end. A falling tree is very suitable for killing a man, but the event does not suggest any design to us. The idea of design can be correctly applied when certain processes are arranged and, co-ordinated with a view to lead to certain special well-defined ends. We can unmistakeably find the working of design in the structural formation of the eye, in the adaptation of the sexes to each other, in the growth of unborn offspring and

provision already made for it, and in the adaptation of our lungs to the outside atmosphere. The presence of design in the world cannot be disputed. Even the man who says that a large number of things in the world do not exhibit design cannot deny that there are others, which do it. A materialist is therefore at one with the believer in God that design and order are present in the world. In fact the main task of science consists in discovering and explaining the orderly sequences of natural phenomena. He, however, tries to explain the presence of design by purely material causes. We shall take up in the next chapter, a critical examination of materialism and see whether the pretensions of this theory to derive order and harmony from matter and force can be rationally justified.

Some instances of design in nature—

(1) If we look at the great system, of which our earth is a member, we are struck with the wonderful arrangement of the planets and the satellites as regards their distance, magnitude, rate and direction of movement, so that the whole world remains quite stable, safe and secure. Just imagine, bodies of colossal magnitudes whirling about in the heavens at tremendous rates without coming in collision with one another. A slight deviation from the path chalked out for them would mean wholesale destruction throughout the system.

Our Solar system is not the only system in the Universe. There are hundreds and thousands of other systems composed of innumerable suns and stars, yet these countless millions of stars and planets, running with breathless haste through the voids of space, and teeming with infinite possibilities of causing destruction all around, never make their existence felt except as brilliant orbs of beauty twinkling in the firmaments above.

(2) And what does Chemistry tell us about the composition of bodies on the earth. Out of a few elements, have been made all the things of the world. The principle

involved in their composition is exactly mathematical. Water can be produced only if two molecules of hydrogen chemically combine with one molecule of oxygen. All the compound substances without exception, can be produced only if the combining elements mix with one another according to certain definite proportions. For every compound, there is a fixed proportion of combining elements. There are no intermediate or transitional compounds in nature. Is this universal fixity of a mathematical ratio a mere matter of chance? Can the mere atoms by their, haphazard and fortuitous agglomeration bring about this wonderful system and order in the composition of things as we find about us.

(3) Let us now look at the instinctive acts of animals. The chief characteristic of an instinctive act is that it is adapted to a certain purpose or end of life and that the animal performs it automatically without being definitely conscious beforehand of the end that the action subserves. The birds build their nests and who has taught them the art of construction? and yet the houses thus built most adequately serve the purposes for which they are meant. In point of the delicacy of workmanship, no human artistic product can compare with the beautiful web, spun by a spider. How can you account for the fact that the animals working almost blindly, should produce these wonderful results, which can originate only from a very superior intelligence? The originality of performing those acts does not lie in them. They can no more design what they do, than the photographic instrument, can; design the picture which it produces. Is it irrational to think that the intelligence, which is not present in the animals but which works through them, is nevertheless there and is the same intelligence which maintains order and harmony in the whole universe?

(4) The same conclusion is forced upon us when we examine the almost too apparent instances of adaptation and design that we meet with in the organic structure of the

vegetable and the animal world. How exquisitely equipped our organs are for performing the different functions assigned to them. The heart pumps blood in the human system and the blood circulating through the entire body rejuvenates and builds up the worn out tissues and muscles. The heart, lungs, stomach, the organs of locomotion, etc., are the best devised organs for carrying out their purposes. The eye and the ear are the most admirable of all. In the face of these adaptations, can any body deny the principle of foresight and intelligence working in nature? "Is there more skill in a pair of spectacles than in a pair of eyes; in the hunter's snare than in the spiders web, in the oars of a boat than in the fins of a fish"? and if you cannot imagine a pair of spectacles coming into existence without the help of intelligence, what stupid waywardness is this, that you can very glibly talk of eyes, being made by the blind workings of natural forces.

It is sometimes urged against the design argument that there are vast regions of nature, which do not exhibit any mark of design or purposiveness. On the other hand, there are evidences of disorderliness, and huge unnecessary waste in certain operations of nature. Certain fishes in the ocean lay millions of eggs and excepting a few, the rest are mercilessly and ruthlessly destroyed. What a huge waste is this? It may be so, to me and to you, who very carefully hoard coins in our boxes and to whom the loss of one coin may be a tremendous loss to be made good some how or other. I think it is childish to use our standard of economy in measuring the gigantic operations of nature.

Besides, we must not presume to think and no scientist worth his salt would lay claim to the fact, that we have succeeded or will ever succeed in near future in deciphering all the hidden and obscure regions of the world in which we live. Is it not a fact, that science is discovering gradually of course, order and system in those places, which, heretofore, had not shown any mark of purpose or design? and what is

there to prevent us, as time goes on, to understand as purposely devised, those occurrences and events, which to our immature and untutored minds appear as a mass of disorderliness and superfluity?

Moreover we have no right to test the purposiveness of nature by reference to our own comforts and utilities. We are sometimes inclined to think that if any event or object of nature is not related to us one way or the other, it is an useless object having no right to exist. We forget, in the blind zeal of self importance, that an event which does not serve us in any way might be rendering an immeasurable service to the interests of the universe as a whole. We cannot do better than conclude this account of the design argument by giving an apt quotation from **Martineau**, "Among the products of artistic skill some may tell their story at a glance, or may reveal it distinctly and impressively on careful analysis, others, while, still betraying the constructive hand, may hide their purpose from our sight, just as of two inscriptions, disinterred from a ruined temple, one may be in a well-known tongue and give its meaning forth at once while the other in an unknown character; may remain undeciphered by the archaeologist," would the archaeologist, have the temerity to declare that the other manuscript, because he cannot decipher it, is meaningless and absurd; and it is what the impatient critics, who cannot understand thoroughly some natural processes, in point of fact, declare.

Many Christian writers on Theism repudiate this argument, because it proves God to be the designer or architect of the world and not its creator. I think it is no fault of the argument, if it cannot prove, what in point of fact, is not true. Many difficulties would manifest themselves if we believe God not only the designer of forms but also the creator of matter. We shall discuss this more later on. But if we assume that God designed this world out of matter, which is coeternal with God, the teleological argument fits in with

all cases quite adequately.

The question underlying the whole of this discussion is; how would you explain order and design if you do not assume intelligence as its cause? The materialistic theory, which has received its fullest development in the theory of evolution, gives a very curious explanation of the presence of design in the Universe. In place of intelligence, it substitutes chance. All this adaptation and design is the result of chance variations. To believe that the universe has originated from the fortuitous and undirected movements of matter, 'evinces a credulity, far more extravagant than has ever been displayed by the most superstitious of religionists'? We shall attempt a detailed criticism of this theory in the following chapter and so we leave it for the time being.

The Moral Argument—The moral argument is not an argument in the logical sense of the term. It gives a psychological description of the motives that lead man to postulate God. We have already found as a result of previous discussion that there is a natural order which manifests itself in the uniform working of the laws of nature. Man is also an ethical being. He lives both in the natural world as well as in the spiritual world. He sees visions of spiritual beauty, and, he naturally wants that the order of nature, instead of being a hindrance, should be a positive help in the task of realizing the spiritual values.

The moral argument asserts on the basis of experience that the natural world is, as a matter of fact, adopted to the realization of the spiritual ideal of life. This possibility of adaptation between the natural and the spiritual world is an indication of the existence of God who is the ground and the harmony between the two otherwise disparate worlds. God has so ordained that moral values can be realized in the world of nature, while nature in itself is inert, lifeless and indifferent to morality.

What does experience teach? The lesson of experience,

as writ large on the dial of time, clearly points to the fact that immorality is self-destructive in the end. No immoral nations have survived in the course of time. Vitality, efficiency, and, morality go hand in hand. Taking the case of individual men, is it not a fact that self-control and temperance are essential to the maintenance of bodily and intellectual efficiency? Can a debauchee or a voluptuous sensualist ever dream of remaining healthy, vigorous and bright, while persisting in immoral indulgences? Does not nature cry halt, as it were, by visiting such a person with doleful consequences? In the same way, selfishness and falsehood, if practised consistently, lead to their own annihilation. Can you point out to me a single individual who is thoroughly selfish from top to bottom? If such a monstrosity can ever exist on the face of this beautiful earth, I can assure you, a man of this type must be the most wretched creature alive. He would be a social outcast, for no one would like to associate with a perfect egoist, who is not prepared to lift his little finger to give succour to his fellow brothers. Is not history replete with instances of selfish ambitious men, whose ambitions assumed gigantic proportions and who eventually fell after a short bright career of doubtful happiness. The moral argument is also stated in a slightly different form. In this altered form, it tries to deduce the existence of God from the fact of moral obligation, that all human beings possess, more or less, moral obligation in their spiritual constitution. An animal, and for the matter of that, man also, is a creature of impulses. These impulses urge him on to diverse activities, and when completely fulfilled they are a source of great satisfaction to the individual, concerned. Beside these natural impulses and passions, we also find in man, the sense of moral obligation, which commands him in unequivocal terms to do the right, though it may be completely opposed to his natural inclinations, which are more pleasurable in their consequences and even

when the means for their gratification are within his easy reach. Why does this sense of duty press so heavily upon all of us and why does the violation of the law of righteousness bring in its train violent reactions of conscience in the form of remorse and self condemnation? Does not the moral law which is catagorically binding upon all of us, and which demands our homage irrespective of all consequences, point to a higher source from which it emanates. The argument as put in this form supplements the previous account of the same argument. If the natural order is so constituted as to be perfectly adopted to the fulfilment of morality, the inner voice of conscience also that speaks in all of us, when we are going to transgress the moral law, points further to the ultimate principle which is the ground of harmony between the natural and the moral order. This argument presupposes the argument from design. *If it is already proved that God is the author and source of design and order in the universe, this argument, by demonstrating harmony between the natural and the moral order undertakes further to prove that God is also the source of the moral law and the moral governance in the world.* To the attribute of intelligence in the diety, it adds the attribute of righteousness and thus it gives us a complete idea of Godhead, so that we can now say God is wise and also righteous.

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Chapter - 3

SCIENTIFIC ATHEISM OR MATERIALISM

Materialism is a theory which explains the origin and sustenance of the universe from merely material causes. Matter and motion taken alone, can weave out of themselves the diversified cosmos which we find around us. No intelligence of any sort needs be postulated as the efficient cause of the universe.

Materialism is a very old theory, appearing in diverse forms in diverse periods; we find it amongst the ancient Greeks no less than amongst the ancient Hindus. We have in **Brihaspati**, a very bold exponent of Atheism. He was the founder of the Chārvāka system of Philosophy. The Chārvākas regard perception or '*Pratyaksha*' as the only genuine source of knowledge and since the efficient cause cannot be directly perceived, they repudiate its existence altogether and regard the entire universe as the outcome of the five elements, mingled together in various proportions. The Chārvākas perhaps never cared to think that no knowledge worth the name can be attained merely on the perceptual plane. The life of the lower animals is passed in a world of perception and they have very little to do with inference or '*Anumān*'. If we were to recognise perception as the only true source of knowledge, our knowledge would never rise superior to that of a cow or a donkey. A man cannot speak two connected sentences without making use of

inference. These Chārvākas argued in their own way that there is no God and yet they never realised that arguing and inferring are in most cases identical processes. In India, however, materialism openly professed and practised, never acquired any reputable standing worth the name.

In modern times, materialism, as a reaction against the unscientific doctrines of Christianity, has become a formidable adversary of theism. It has received a great impetus from the rapid spread of scientific knowledge, and, materialism as at present enunciated has a certain plausibility about it on account of the scientific garb that it wears. Hence it is all the more necessary that it should be thoroughly understood and exposed.

Materialism clearly stated—There is a great diversity in nature. This multifarious diversity, however, can be dissolved ultimately into atoms and their combinations. Atoms form the primary stuff; the apparent diversity in nature is only secondary. The world as we perceive it, is the outcome of the accidental combinations of atoms. If somebody were to object as to how order and harmony can emerge from the blind workings of natural forces, the materialists would unhesitatingly declare that the world, which shows ample evidence of orderliness and design, is the outcome of a long series of experiments. Before this world could come into manifestation, many other worlds were automatically produced and destroyed on account of their unsuitability. Amongst the countless cases of such formations and destructions, it is quite possible to believe, so say the materialists, that a world should be formed of the kind that we, have now, with design, harmony and order reigning supreme in it.

Chance with a capital C, is the originator, of beauty, harmony and material adjustment in the universe. The materialists have dethroned God and elevated chance, mere blind chance, to the position of dictatorship and power, with

what success, we shall see in the sequel.

(2) The theory of materialism tries to account for the processes, of growth and decay in living bodies such as the vegetables and the plants, in exactly the same way. If matter can produce lifeless bodies why should it be denied the power of producing living substances. If you were to say that up to this time not a single living cell has been prepared artificially in the laboratory and that life can only come from life and not from inanimate matter, he would say that the time is coming when this gap in knowledge would be gradually filled up. Moreover the matter of living bodies is the same as that of lifeless objects. Carbon, hydrogen, oxygen, nitrogen etc. of which living bodies are composed, are lifeless in their nature; when they are brought together under certain conditions, they, give rise to different kind of living substances. We, of course, do not as yet know, the complete details of the process, but matter is capable of miraculous transformations, and it is not beyond its powers, to effect the wonderful feat, namely, that of generating life, where there was originally none. It is beyond the purpose of the materialist and he would safely ignore the fact if you point out to him that so far as experience goes, life takes its rise only from life and that the category of life cannot be completely explained merely on the basis of physical and chemical principles.

The timely help of the theory of evolution

Once assume that life somehow or other came to be produced on this earth, the theory of evolution would then readily come forward to complete the tale. According to this theory, from a few living organisms, in the beginning, all the countless species of animals ranging from amoeba to man have come into existence. The whole process of organic evolution works according to the laws of variations and the survival of the fittest. The law of variations, takes for its basis, the familiar fact that the offspring or the progeny of a

certain parent animal, exhibit most of the attributes of their progenitor with slight variations. The offspring is not always the exact prototype of its ancestors. There is always some difference, however, slight it may be, between the two. In the beginning of organic evolution also, the few living organisms, that then existed, begot their offspring with slight variations. These variations were propagated onwards, getting bigger in volume with each act of propagation. In course of time, by continual accumulation of variations, the new species came to be entirely different from the original ancestors from whom they directly descended. In this way all the different species of animals have originated. Differentiation of species, therefore according to the evolutionist, is not the result of some intelligent force, working upon the original materials. It is all explicable on the basis of chemical and physical laws working in a strictly natural manner. There was another law also simultaneously working—the law of the survival of the fittest. According to this law, all the animals produced in this fashion, could not survive in the struggle for existence. Only the fittest—those that could adopt themselves to their environments could survive—the rest perished in the struggle.

The evolutionists explain mind or consciousness in the same way. In course of time, the necessity of adaptation to ever changing environments led to the formation of a highly developed brain, with the concomitant appearance of consciousness. The animals which possessed consciousness had a distinct advantage over others who were without it, and consciousness also underwent evolution, till it gradually attained that highly complex form, which we find in the consciousness of man.

Criticism of materialism

(1) We have given the materialistic theory at its best. I do not know, how it can convince an intelligent person, unless

he is biassed in its favour and bent upon explaining all phenomena by the help of physical and chemical laws. Let us take in the first place the inorganic world. Does it stand to reason, that matter alone can generate the requisite movement in the atoms so that they can arrange themselves in most artistic manner, producing the awe-inspiring choir of heavens above and the wonderful things of the earth below? Matter is inert, lifeless, inactive, incapable of spontaneous movement, as expressed in the following law of Newton,—“Everybody perseveres in its state of rest or moving uniformly in a straight line, except in so far as it is made to change that state by external forces.” This is a fundamental law of physical science and it clearly lays down that matter cannot move of itself without external agency.

It is quite a pertinent question then to ask,—“Whence did the first movement come? Aristotle was quite right when he said that the prime mover must be some intelligent force without whose intervention matter cannot start in its course of evolution. We do not fight shy of evolution, We believe that the sun, the moon and in fact the entire arrangement of nature, as it exists at present, were not produced in a day by the fiat of the deity. All these transformations of the original *Prakṛti*, could not have been effected without the lapse of millions and millions of years. What we want to make clear is the fact that the course of evolution cannot start on its way unless there is some intelligent force in the beginning to give it an impetus and a certain well-defined direction, for without the latter the term evolution ceases to have any meaning at all. We want intelligence to start the process, for *Prakṛti* or matter has no inherent power to initiate the movement by itself. If we believe that the *three gunas of Prakṛti* were in a state of equilibrium before the movement began, one has a right to ask as to how that state of stable equilibrium was disturbed and the process of world formation begun if we

do not posit intelligence in the beginning.

(2) How would you explain, in the next place, the presence of order, harmony and design, that are the most fundamental characteristics of this mundane Universe? The same question is asked in the *Yog Darshan* as to how the blind tendency of the non-intelligent *Prakarti* can bring forth the order and harmony of the Universe. There must be some intelligent being "who should help the course of evolution in such a way that this system of order and harmony, may be attained, and that intelligent being according to the author of the *Yoga* philosophy, is God, i.e., *Ishwara*. It is by the will of this *Ishwara* that "the proper barriers are removed and the *gunas* of *Prakarti* follow their natural course of evolution for the service of the best interests of the *Purushas* or *Souls*".

How can chance bring about, in the name of reason, those wonderful adaptations which we find in organic and inorganic nature alike? Can you imagine that by shuffling the letters of the alphabet, in all sorts of ways, a countless number of times, you can eventually produce the *Ramayana* of Valmiki or the *Hamlet* of Shakespeare? And that is what the scientists want you to believe. The atoms or molecules that form the primeval stuff of the universe, blindly and accidentally mingle in all sorts of ways, till eventually, as the result of these countless haphazard experiments, the sun, the stars, and the earth with all its multifarious contents, come into existence. I regard it as a glaring instance of scientific superstition.

(3) The phenomena of life present still greater difficulties in the way of materialism. Living bodies, such as the plants and the animals, have the peculiar characteristics of growth and decay. The modern biologists have mostly come round to the view, that we must assume the presence of some vital principle in all living bodies, the chemical and physical laws, being quite inadequate to explain the phenomenon of life. Material atoms are lifeless, inert,

incapable of growth or decay. That a combination of these lifeless atoms should produce life and growth, passes all understanding.

Moreover, the united efforts of all the scientists of the world have not been successful as we have already pointed out, in producing a single living cell from inanimate matter. As far as experience goes, life requires life for its generation, vegetables or plants are produced from plant germs, and animals from animal germs. There is no other way in nature for the manifestation of life.

(4) When we come to consciousness or mind, the failure of the theory of materialism becomes quite apparent. According to this theory, mind or consciousness is the product of the functioning of the brain. The molecules of the brain move at tremendous velocities and as a result of that movement, consciousness emerges. How innocent sometimes these scientists become in their zeal for propagating the materialistic hypothesis. Movement can change into movement or some other form of energy but that movement should change into thoughts, emotions and desires is a novel and unheard of application of the scientific law of the conservation of energy. It is as difficult to believe that the movement of the molecules in the brain can produce thought as to believe that the rapid movement of electric fan can generate consciousness in the atmosphere around.

(5) Materialism cannot give any explanation of the moral and spiritual aspirations of man. The freedom of human soul becomes a mere myth, a mere illusion. The actions of man are absolutely governed by mechanical conditions just as the movements of the heavenly bodies are controlled by the lifeless forces of nature. We often feel that we could have acted differently from the way we have acted and we give way to remorse for acting wrongly. "All this is foolish", says the materialist. "We could not have acted differently, as no

freedom of choice is possible in this world." The efforts of man cannot change the course of nature. *Ethical fatalism is the only logical consequence of the theory of materialism.*

A thorough-going materialist poohpoohs at all the cherished values of mankind. Love, sympathy, justice and sense of righteousness are evanescent manifestations, produced by the movements of the brain molecules. The desire of spiritual union with God is a mere fiction, the result of the misdirection of the energy stored in the particles of brain. Materialism does, not believe in self-abnegation or the denial of the physical comforts in the interests of the soul. According to it all these spiritual teachings are due to the ignorance of the real constitution of the world.

Some comments on the theory of evolution

The Darwinian theory of evolution gives an additional weapon in the hands of the materialist, by explaining the origin of species on mechanical principle. How, unsatisfactory the explanation is, will appear from the following—

(1) In the first place, the evolutionists assume the existence of certain living organisms, which are the primary source or fountain-head of all succeeding evolution. How these organisms came to appear on the face of the earth, is a problem which the supporters of this view do not think it worth while to tackle; and the reason is that it is incapable of solution from the materialistic stand-point.

(2) The theory accounts for the origin of different species by the help of the law of variation. Small variations in course of time accumulated into big variations and thus a new species took its rise from the old. How are these variations produced? "It is a matter of chance," says Darwin while the opinion of Lamarck is that the environments help in the production of these variations. A concrete instance will make the whole thing clear. How did the giraffes come to have long necks. The followers of Darwin will account for the

fact by saying that accidentally some giraffes were born with long necks. These long-necked giraffes had an advantage over the short-necked ones for they could easily reach the leaves of the higher branches of trees which the latter could not. These better equipped giraffes bequeathed their long necks to their offspring. In course of time, these long-necked animals, having an advantage in the struggle for life, flourished and lived on, while the others who did not possess similar advantages were exterminated according to the law of the survival of the fittest. The followers of **Lamarck** would make a slight alteration in this account by saying that the few giraffes which came to possess long necks in the beginning did not get them by chance but owing to the influence of the particular circumstances in which they lived. This however does not mend matters. The question may be put; how is it that of the many giraffes living in similar or the same environments, only a few grew long necks and the others did not. So we can only say that it, was a matter of chance. No other explanation can be given for the appearance of these variations.

Now let us examine this account a little. In the first place, we must remember that whenever chance is invoked to explain a certain fact, we are clearly to understand thereby that it is no, explanation at all. It is merely an attempt to disguise one's ignorance under the weight of more empty verbiage.

Secondly it may be asked whether there is anything in our experience to show that small variations by successive propagation and constant additions on the way, can become so big as to bring into existence quite a new type of species. At least experience does not help us here. There may be variations in accidental or inessential characters, but as far as the essential, nature of a certain animal is concerned, it remains for the most part the same in the successive

generations. The future generations of dogs may have different sizes, colours, shapes etc, but that they would no longer remain dogs and become something quite new, is too strange to be credible.

Thirdly we must not forget that the acquired characteristics of the ancestors cannot be transmitted to the descendents. If a man develops the capacity of singing, it is not necessary that his son would be born with a special predilection for music. "The theory of inheritance of acquired traits has gone by the board; biologists no longer accept such traits, as an individual's tanned skin acquired by living in the tropics,—big muscular development acquired by gymnastics,—are not transmitted by heredity to the children of the individual, who acquired these traits." (Wordsworth).

Fourthly it may be asked whether this law of variations is working even now so that there is every possibility of some of the present species to be transformed into new forms or whether the law has now stopped, working. If the law works no longer, it is quite legitimate to enquire as to what has led to the abrogation of the law.

(3) The second important law is the law of the survival of the fittest. According to this, law, the fittest of the animals survive, the rest die out in the struggle for existence. But it gives no account of the all important fact as to how some organisms came to be fitter than the others. It only says that "when some living bodies have emerged with certain characteristics which qualify them for continuance, they will survive as against organisms that do not possess those characteristics", but it does not explain as how the former come in possession of the favourable characteristics. Let us illustrate this by taking a parallel instance from the phenomenon of artificial selection. When a breeder wants to bring about certain qualities in an intensive form in the breed, he selects for mating couples which possess those

qualities in some degree. It is quite true that the desired results are attained when animals possessing certain qualities are made to pair together, but what we most want to know, is an explanation, as how the qualities thus selected have arisen. This problem, however, as to how the fittest come to possess the characteristics that made them the fittest, continues to be ignored by the philosophical evolutionists as well as the biologists.

(4) The theory of evolution does not give any explanation of purposive actions that we find in the animal kingdom so abundantly. Let us take the concrete illustration of a hen laying an egg. Here is a 'physico-chemical complex' so devised that when suitably warmed for a few days, say a week, it will bring forth a living creature, capable of carrying on all the fundamental qualities displayed by man himself". The hen is perhaps quite unconscious of what it is doing. From a hen possessing a very low mental development, issues a highly complex purposive living thing, the like of which man, "foremost in the files of time," with all the resources of modern science and a highly trained intellect, cannot produce artificially in his chemical or physical laboratory.

Let us take the second illustration, i.e., the appliances which the organism builds up within itself. Internal organs for carrying on the processes of circulation, digestion, respiration and excretion, sense organs for acquainting the animal of the nature of its environment, organs for purposes of locomotion, nervous mechanism for correlating the activities of the organism as a whole—all these have arisen without any conscious intention of the animal concerned and yet precisely as if conscious purposiveness had been at work throughout. Similar instances can be cited from the instinctive activities of most of the lower animals, which go through a complex chain of actions that irresistably lead to a certain definite goal, without any consciousness on the part of the

animal concerned.

The question may be asked as to how all these purposive mechanisms have come to exist. Are they all haphazard, fortuitous, the result of accidental variations? If similar actions or products of man denote foresight, purposefulness, is it irrational to attribute the presence of such highly purposive activities in nature to the work and foresight of some intelligent force? The process of evolution for what we know, may be exactly as the evolutionists describe it; we do not want to quarrel about it. But evolution does require the guidance of intelligence, if it is not to end in mere futility or self-destruction. Mere chance or accidental variations cannot land us at an anchorage of safety and confidence.

(5) Why did not the evolution stop? If evolution is to be interpreted in terms of adaptation to environment such adaptation, was achieved long ago in beings whom we regard as inferior. The monkey has fewer diseases than man and the elephant has a longer span of life. If perfect adaptation had been secured at lower stages of evolution. why did the evolution not stop there? So argues Joad in his book 'Matter and Mind'. Where was the necessity of its ascending higher and higher till it produced man. Man considered, from a purely physical point of view is hopelessly unfitted to this environment besides being the most destructive of all the creatures.

If it be contended that evolution has for its aim, not simply physical efficiency and adaptation, but also the production of qualitatively higher forms of life, then we shall have to make provision for a force which is different from matter and at the same time higher than matter. Matter taken, all in all, is incapable of producing moral and spiritual values, which play no important a role in the life of cultured men.

Practical consequences of materialism—Loyalty to materialism and repudiation of all the higher spiritual and

moral values, lead to a very narrow contracted outlook, in the practical affairs of life. Physical efficiency and well-being become the aim of human endeavours. Body is pampered at the cost of the spirit. Worship of the God of wealth and the profession of theoretical materialism may be found marching hand in hand as boon companions. We do not assert that all who profess materialism, are without exception, liable to rank wealth above everything else, we only submit that the tendency lies that way.

The theory of evolution, with survival of the fittest, has entered into the very soul of the modern civilized nations. It has become the code of the civilized people that it is only the physically efficient who ought to survive, the rest should humbly accept exploitation or destruction. This view is expressed in its nakedness in **Nietzsche's** philosophy. I feel inclined to think that racial discrimination and the colour question which loom so large in modern politics, can be traced back to the belief that the white people, being physically more efficient and handsome than others, are naturally fitted to be the rulers of the world. The law of the survival of the fittest rules with an iron hand, while God has been banished from the heart of the so called civilized man.

The profession of materialism also brings pessimism in its train; it cannot give lasting satisfaction. The things of the world cannot maintain their glamour for ever and when the superficial glitter is gone, hopeless discontentment becomes the regular feature of man's life. To such a man the world is a "magic show, a patomime in which God has neither part nor lot". To such a man the world appears rotten to the core, all farce and vanity. What satisfaction can fall to the lot of the man, who believes himself to be living in a world, which is a mockery, a succession of farce and tragedy, a world where virtue may rot while vice may prosper.

Chapter - 4

PANTHEISM OR ADWAITISM

Pantheism is a theory, which resolves every thing unto God. "All is God" may be described as the general formula of the pantheistic system. The things of the world, as well as the human selves are the manifestations of divinity at different levels of experience. Some times the word "Absolutism" is used to indicate the highest synthesis which covers up in one whole the differentiations of reality.

Pantheism has a sort of fascination for most men and pantheistic systems, in slightly different forms, have exercised a great influence, in the east and the west, in modern times as well as in ancient times. One main reason of the popularity of the system is that it feeds the mystical element in the religious consciousness of mankind. Religious mysticism takes the form of an aspiration for union with God. A religious devotee yearns for absorption into the divine. From this desire for union and absorption, there takes place an easy but intellectually fallacious transition to the belief that the yearning soul, and the God are one and identical. Pantheism provides an intellectual justification of the mystical side of religious consciousness.

The main thesis of pantheism, therefore, is that there is one single and all embracing principle, that manifests itself in the diversity of mental and physical phenomena so that the apparent many are really one. The various pantheistic systems, however, differ in the determination of the nature of the absolute or the single unifying principle of the universe.

Some systems set forth God as self-conscious, others as unconscious, according to some, the nature of God is thought, while others regard *will* to be the absolute principle. **Hartmann** and **Schaupanheur** in the West are the upholders of the doctrine that blind unconscious *will* is the ultimate principle or the creative force of the universe. Out of the blind working of *will* emerges gradually the ever increasing complexity in the phenomena of nature and mind. Schaupanheur speaks of his blind *will* as a broad expansive river that dissipates and scatters itself into small tiny rivulets. He, however, never explains how the river scatters itself into small rivulets unless there is some other principle that obstructs the onward march of the river. It is also, not clear, how one can derive foresight, prevision, and conscious deliberation from a blind unconscious will.

Shankarcharya, the head of the pantheistic movement in India, regards the Absolute or Brahama's pure unconditioned knowledge or *Gyana*. In the pantheistic system, the Absolute, in whatever form it is conceived, whether as thought or will, conscious or unconscious, is an all devouring and all inclusive principle. It is the absolute, devoid of all relations. The rest including the finite selves are relative and conditioned, having no independent existence of their own. In the words of Bosenquet, the absolute is the only substantive; the finite souls are adjectival in their nature and outlook.

Pantheism as propounded by Swami Shankaracharya—Shankar laid the foundation of his philosophy on the *Upnishads* and the *Brahma Sutras* of Badrayana. He tried to show that the doctrines which he propounded, were not his own, but could be traced back to the *Upnishads* and through them to the Vedas. The aim of this chapter is not to examine the pretensions of Shankar and his followers, and whether the Commentaries of the

Upnishads and the Sutras as written by Shankar represent the true spirit of those books. We shall simply make a critical estimate of the doctrines of Swami Shankaracharya as clearly and concisely as possible; and for that purpose, it is necessary for us to have a preliminary acquaintance with the teachings of Shankar's philosophy.

The main idea of the *Adwaita* philosophy as taught by Shankar is that, *Brahma*, is the only reality manifesting itself in various individuals. All else is *Maya*; *Brahma* or self is the only truth. A common man looks at the world and the various objects of the world. He sees trees, mountains, stars, water, animals and other objects. He comes in contact with human beings who appear to him as leading entirely separate existences. In the innocence of his native, simplicity, he thinks that all these objects are real! Their reality is pressed home to him at all hours of the day when he meets resistance from them in most of his activities. Shankar would call such men poor deluded fools, who know not what truth really is. According to Shankar, all these objects of the world are illusions or *Maya*. The idea of finite selves existing independently is perhaps the greatest of illusions. You are not a limited erring finite self, which you think, you are. You are the *Brahma*—infinite bliss, infinite knowledge and infinite power. Even inanimate objects participate in the nature of *Brahma*. According to some extreme *Adwaitists* God is present with the same fullness in a stone as in a human soul. In short every thing is *Brahma* and *Brahma* is the true absolute self, infinite bliss and infinite intelligence, a perfect being, so to speak, lacking in nothing and free from all conditions and relations. "*Tat Tvam Asi*—That thou art" so the Vedantists say, though in your ignorance you know it is not.

If everything is *Brahma*, why do we not know it? It is a legitimate question which must naturally suggest itself to

anyone who thinks a little about this system, and Shankar is ready with all answer. You do not realize your identity with God, because you are enveloped in *Maya* or ignorance. Once you get rid of this *Maya*, and scales will fall from your eyes. You will see truth face to face. You will realize that the world which appears so solid and substantial to the unsophisticated common sense of ordinary mortals, does not really exist, it is a mere hallucination, a mere product of imagination. This fabric of images and thoughts, is shattered to pieces as soon as the soul of man is illuminated with the light of divine truth. For such a man "there is no duality, no notion of mine and thine, the vast illusion of this world process is extinct in him and he shines forth as the one, the truth, the *Brahma*."

As long as we are on the plane of duality, we regard this world as created by *Ishwara*. *Ishwara* is a phase of *Brahm* engaged in the activity of creating. When we reach the higher stand point of truth, creation becomes illusory; and so, the creator or *Ishwar* is also illusory, from that point of view. *Brahm* is at once the material cause (*Uppādāna Kāraṇa*) and the efficient cause (*Nimitta Kāraṇa*) of the universe. There is no difference between the cause (which is *Brahm*) and the effect (which is this world); and the effect which appears distinct from the cause is a mere illusion of name and form (*Nāma Rūpa*).

The Vedantists try to establish the central doctrine of their philosophy by the well-known and familiar instances of the illusion of snake in the rope and the so called reality of dream images. Just as the objects of a dream appear real to a dreaming person which actually they are not, similarly the objects of our waking experience are equally unreal, though they are only a stage removed from the unreality of dream images.

Criticism of Pantheism in general—

(1) The first great difficulty in the way of pantheism is

the derivation of the many from the one. If the absolute was the only existent in the beginning, perfect and unconditioned, what could be the motive of its assuming the diversity of names and forms. As already assumed there was no external force working upon it. That a changeless, perfect, absolute being should subject itself to change, when it could gain nothing thereby, appears a gratuitous and self contradictory assumption. If it be claimed that the ultimate principle had the germs of evolution in itself, it would also carry the further implication that perfection does not lie in the beginning but in the end, when the *Absolute* would have gained in richness and fullness, after having passed through the successive phases of evolution. Just mark what it really means. The absolute, according to this view, is imperfect in the beginning, not quite conscious of the goal of its evolution, and working almost blindly in the earlier stages of its development. What can be the guarantee that such a blind principle, would end in becoming perfect, and that the world as it now is, would gradually but surely lead to a definite goal, when there was no consciousness of such a goal in the very source or fountain-head of all these differences? Try as you may, it is a great difficulty in the way of pantheism to explain how the differences of the experienced world could have issued from a single all inclusive abstract principle.

(2) The theory of pantheism cannot explain evil and imperfection in the world. If the absolute is perfect in its essence, how can imperfection and evil take their rise from it. Do evil and wickedness belong to God? If not, how would you explain their presence? The only course left open to a pantheist is to assert that evils and imperfections appear as such only from a human point of view, and that in the absolute, evil is transcended into a higher synthesis where it becomes an instrument for the promotion of the Good. Why should the absolute bother itself for the advancement of the

Good. It looks very strange and eccentric on the part of the absolute, perfect in all respects, to create obstacles and hindrances and then try for the removal of the same. There is one more alternative and many pantheists resort to it, and that is to deny evil altogether. There is no evil in the world. The conception of evil is based upon ignorance. As soon as enlightenment comes, evil, as if by alchemy, becomes transformed into a phase of the good, and remains evil no longer. It is a great feat of credulity of which only the pantheists are capable,—to believe that wickedness, tyranny, debauchery, pain and sorrow, which are almost too common amongst the unfortunate mortals are mere illusions and do not really exist. It is the same feat which is performed by a pigeon when it shuts its eyes, and imagines that the cat is no longer there. It is childish to think that the great problem of evil can be solved by simply calling it an illusion and thereby getting immune from all responsibility what-so-ever.

(3) Freedom of choice or human responsibility cannot be maintained on the basis of the pantheistic theory. Human souls have no status what-so-ever, in this system. They are sparks from the infinite. They are mere bubbles in the ocean of the absolute, and these bubbles cannot have any laws of their own apart from the laws of the ocean. Their positions and movements are to be determined by the general movement of the ocean as a whole. In its bearing upon the question of human freedom, pantheism stands on the same footing as materialism. Both the theories rob man of all power of initiative, freedom of choice and even the shadow of responsibility.

According to Shankar evil in man is due to ignorance or *Maya*. But how can I be responsible for this ignorance? I did not invite it of my own free will. A follower of Shankar is, therefore, perfectly justified in disowning all responsibility for his wicked actions.

(4) It is very difficult to think how my mind, can be at one and the same time, be my mind as well as a part of the divine mind. How does God think of the thoughts, that are passing in my mind? Does he think of my thoughts, exactly in the same ways as I think of them? When I feel pain, does God also feel pain in the same way? When I am angry or afraid, does my anger or fear affect God in the same way as it affects me? What else is meant, when it is said that the human mind is a part of divine mind? It might be said perhaps that "a human experience becomes expanded and transformed when regarded as a part of God's experience." Yet it is very difficult to understand, how an experience that means one thing to me, should mean something quite different to God.

Comments on Shankar's philosophy—The objections made in the preceding section, apply as much to Shanker's philosophy as to any other form of pantheism. Beside these, the following points are also worth consideration.

(5) According to Shankar, the phenomenal world has originated from *Brahma*. He has however, nowhere explained the process of origination. There are three possibilities of emanation.

Has the world emanated from *Brahma*, automatically, without any knowledge or consciousness of the absolute? In that case the *Brahma* would be reduced to a being without knowledge, which he is not, according to the premises of *advaitism*. Has the world originated, because the *Brahma* desired its emanation? Desire always indicates some want, and the presence of desire in *Brahma* takes away from his absolute perfection and changelessness. There is a third possibility still remaining. We might suppose that the origination of the world was due to the impact of some external force upon the absolute. With this assumption, the whole structure of Shankar's pantheism would come toppling

down in a heap of ruins. In fact, taking the *Brahma* of Shankar as it is, there is no earthly possibility of getting the world out of it; no bridge of any sort can be built to connect the absolute with the world of appearances in which we all live.

(6) The concept of *Maya* or ignorance plays a very important part in the philosophy of Shankar. In fact it is the anchor-hold of the *Adwaita system*. Where no rational logical explanation, can possibly be given, the shelter of *Maya* is taken in such cases of emergency. *Maya* is sometimes described as the creative energy of the absolute, but one cannot understand as to why this energy inherent in *Brahma*, should take the form of ignorance or illusion. It is strange that *Maya*, working upon the absolute, should make him forget that he is *Brahma*. It is a force of *Brahma* himself. It is evident that he has no control over that force. If it is not the creative energy of *Brahma*, what is it then? It would not solve matters by saying that *Maya* is (anarvachhaiya) *that it is and it is not*. That it is something is evident from the fact that even *Brahma* cannot escape from its spells and charms. If there were no *Maya*, *Brahma* would have remained a *Brahma* forever and no world hallucination would have ever been created and yet it cannot be a *perfect all knowing Brahma* that can fall a victim to the blandishments of this elusive fairy-like creature called *Maya*.

(7) *Brahma* is regarded as both the material and the efficient cause of this universe which includes matter and mind. Humanselves have emanated from him and also the material substances such as stones, water etc. There must be some aspect in him corresponding to matter and another aspect corresponding to mind. Matter and mind as they appear in this world, have nothing in common, and are absolutely disparate from each other in characterisation. How can material atoms and finite souls be lodged harmoniously in the same absolute, is a tough matter to understand. Is He

an organism like a human body? Is He like Spinoza's substance neither mind nor matter, but something quite different from both? If He is neither mind nor matter, how can either mind or matter come out of Him? How can one indivisible *Brahma* be broken up into numberless selves and what is the relation of that *Brahma* to the selves? These and numberless other questions must always remain unanswered on the basis of the *Adwaita* philosophy.

(8) I am a *Brahma* and yet I do not know that I am so. The reason is, that I am enveloped in ignorance or *Maya*. How can *Brahma* and ignorance live together? These are incompatible terms. If you are *Brahma*, you are not ignorant, if you are ignorant, you are not *Brahma*. There is no escape from this dilemma possible to *Adwaitist*. We must know that *Brahma* stands for knowledge and perfection. To say that a man is *Brahma*, but through ignorance does not know himself to be such, is to say, that a man can be a wise man and a fool at the same time. It is violating the law of contradiction with a vengeance and it is sad to think that the so called *Vedantists* never realize the state of things to which they have brought themselves, by there insane and unconnected account of the nature of reality and truth. I shall touch one point more and then I shall finish.

(9) It is the belief of the *Vedantists* that only right knowledge can dissipate the state of ignorance and can make man realize his oneness with God. Knowledge can lift him from the lowest depth of degradation to the highest pinnacle of spiritual attainment. They extol knowledge at the cost of action. They forget that a proper combination of *Gyana* and *Karma* serve as a means of moral regeneration. In moral and spiritual matters, action is the channel through which a man can pass to a deeper realization of truth. We daily hear the moral injunctions to be truthful, honest, kind etc. and we are none the better for them. A man can realize the value of

honesty not by simply knowing that honesty is good, but by actually living an honest life. In Science, knowledge has a value in itself apart from the uses to which it can be put. In moral and spiritual matters, knowledge must be tested by right actions before it can be reliable. The road to right knowledge is through right living. It is the right action that can alone illumine the moral reason. This repudiation of action in season and out of season had a most deplorable influence on the practical life of the people who came in touch with the doctrine of *adwaitism*, but we have no space to touch upon that point here.

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Chapter - 5

GOD, SOULS AND MATTER

Mechanism—We have already found in a previous chapter that the theory of mechanism is utterly inadequate to give a complete explanation of natural and vital phenomena. It cannot account for order and harmony, in the universe; nor can it satisfactorily explain the behaviour of living creatures. There is an increasing tendency on the part of the biologists to interpret animal behavior in terms of purpose. Animals are not simple machines. There is a kind of intelligence in them, which directs their activities with reference to some end. Not only does it direct the actions of an animal, it also moulds the structure of the animal. The crab, if it by some mischance, loses one of its legs, immediately begins to grow another to take its place. Can simple inert matter perform this feat?

In the second place a living organism is a unity in a sense in which a machine is not. A machine is an aggregate of parts adjusted to one other. You can break-open the machine to pieces and combine them again. But you cannot perform this act of physical analysis on a living creature with the intention of restoring the separate parts to the original unity. A machine is a sum of its parts. A living animal is more than a sum of its parts, and lastly we have found that we cannot derive consciousness from mere matter. Thoughts, emotions, desires, aspirations and other mental phenomena cannot be explained in terms of matter and motion. Dead inert atoms may be combined in all sorts of ways. They would

always remain dead, and would not, by any possible miracle burst forth into life and consciousness. That souls should take their rise from dead matter, is a doctrine, that can be believed only under the influence of scientific prejudice and superstition. How can souls be assimilated into matter? Matter can be weighed, yet who can weigh the inspiration that breathes in the verses of a poet? Who can weigh love, thought and desire in the physical balance? Nor can consciousness be regarded as a form of energy. The different forms of energy can be changed into one another, but it is inconceivable that heat could be changed into love, or motion could be changed into a sentiment of hatred or piety. There is an absolutely impassable gulf between matter and consciousness.

Our conclusion, therefore, is that matter is essentially different from mind. In order to have a satisfactory explanation of the world, we shall have to posit at least two ultimate principles, *Prakriti* and *Purusha*, while *Parkariti* is made up of homogenous atoms, that are capable of combinations in different proportions, *Purushas* or souls on the other hand are many in number, that combine with material bodies, and, work out their destinies according to the law of *Karma*. We shall refer to the law of *Karma* more at length later on, so we leave it for the present.

God, the third principle—Can *Prakirti* and *Purushas* or matter and souls taken by themselves, work out the evolution of this wonderful universe. Matter alone cannot produce design and harmony. It is blind and inert and requires an intelligence to direct it or make things out of it. Can human souls in their collective capacity, supply the place of that intelligence? Human souls, as we know them, have limited powers. Their intelligence, can work on a small scale. It is no better than a mad man's talk to say that some soul or an assemblage of souls are responsible for the production of

this vast and gigantic universe consisting of the sun, the moon, stars and other objects. The intelligence, which has fashioned this universe, must be infinitely greater than that of the greatest man on the face of the earth.

God, souls and matter are therefore the three different types of realities, which must be regarded as co-eternal and which supply the three ultimate principles of the constitution of the Brahmānda or the universe as a whole. None of them can be derived from the other. We have already found in the chapter on Materialism that life and mind cannot be derived from matter, similarly while commenting on Panthiesm we found that it is impossible to regard God as passing or developing into nature or mind. We cannot regard matter and spirits as manifestations of God without landing ourselves into a bundle of contradictions. Panthiesm blends the being of God with things and "its conception neither gives scope to human freedom nor the development of moral values". Moreover it is inconceivable how a spiritual substance can wear the appearance of or can be solidified into a material and a spatially extended universe!

There is, however, one possibility left and we shall examine it at some length. It is the belief of the Christian and Mohamedan theologians that God creates matter and souls not out of himself but out of nothing.

Creation out of nothing—According to the belief of the Christians and the Mohamedans, there was nothing in the beginning excepting God, and that at a certain point in time, He, out of his infinite mercy and power, created the world and the souls as we find them now. He brought them into existence out of nothing "There is no doubt a certain inconsistency," Galloway says. "In the idea of creating out of nothing, as if what is truly negative can be made in some inexplicable fashion to yield a positive". Perhaps the upholders of this doctrine never care to go into the logic of

their statements. Their implicit faith seems to be that what are human impossibilities are God's possibilities. Even Dr. Flint, a great Christian Theologian has to confess, that "the scientific proof of the non-eternity of matter is as yet far from a complete one".

There is one other grave objection against the doctrine of the non-eternity of matter. If matter was produced at a certain specific point in time, God might have remained quiescent and in-operative for ages before the act of creation accomplished. How did God pass the time before he entered upon the task of creating the world? What was the motive underlying the fact of creation? If the creation of the world is a good, what reason can be given as to why, he delayed the consummation of this good for ages together. It may be said that he desired the creation but his power had not been adequate to the magnitude of the achievement. It only means that his power underwent evolution till it reached a point when it could successfully undertake the work of creation. Then God no longer remains almighty and perfect as he is claimed to be. In fact no satisfactory answer has ever been given to these questions, by the adherents of the creation theory.

How would you explain the existence of misery, pain and evil in the world on the basis of this theory? God created the world, but who created evil and misery? Why did God create world in which pain and evil abound? Who can be held responsible for the arbitrary distinctions between man and man? While one man has got all the comforts of life, and the benefits of education, another man is rotting in unspeakable misery, poverty and torment. These poor miserable creatures have a right to curse God for visiting them with gratuitous afflictions for no fault of their own. They would never have liked to be born in that condition, yet God inflicted this necessity upon them. The conclusion

that can be drawn, as regards the nature of God who created them is, that either he is an eccentric cruel God who does not care about the well-being of his creatures, or, he cannot control the forces that he once let loose so that they now run wild causing havoc and destruction all round.

The freedom of will also remains inexplicable on this theory. If souls are created by God, they cannot be free and consequently they cannot be held responsible for their evil deeds. To say that the souls are created, means that their natures; whatever they are, have been determined by God, and therefore their deeds, emanating from a nature, which is not their own, cannot properly be said to be autonomous and free. To be created and to be free are contradictory terms, which can never be reconciled one with the other. Professor Howison says, "if man is not coeternal with God, there will be neither God nor man", again "Creation is self contradictory if the creatures should be free agents and not machines; we must give up either the freedom of the created, or, the creation by God's creationism must logically exclude the possibility of freedom."

Certain objections to the eternity of matter examined—

(1) The first objection that is often urged against the eternity of matter, is that it violates the law of causation. "Every effect has a cause" is a very sound principle which no one has a right to object to. From this the conclusion is drawn that matter also must have a cause. There is a confusion in the understanding of the principle. The law does not assert that every thing must have a cause; but only that every event or effect must have a cause. When a thing undergoes a change, that change is an event and has had a beginning. From this we cannot logically argue that the thing itself must also have a cause, unless it is distinctly proved that the thing has a beginning in time. *If it is proved that matter had a beginning in time, it then becomes an effect, and the law of*

causation can be directly applied to it—These objectors try to apply the law of causation to matter before proving that the said matter had a beginning in time. To prove that matter had begun to be at a certain time, because the law of causation can be applied to it, is like putting the cart before the horse.

(2) It is also urged that if matter be assumed to be eternal, working mechanically under physical laws, the need of God's agency is entirely eliminated. If the seed put in the ground under suitable conditions of heat and moisture can blossom forth into a sapling and finally grow into a big tree, the necessity of God's agency is seen no where. The whole thing goes on automatically according to physical laws so that matter appears to be a self sufficient principle for carrying out its operations.

It is assumed in this argument that the seed, moisture heat, and the conditions of the soil are self-existent in their nature and do not require any explanation. How did the seed come to have the power of germination and growth? How did all the necessary conditions come together at the same place? Besides it has been suggested that the physical laws are the laws devised by matter itself. It is absurd to think that these laws, which are an indication of the working of intelligence could have evolved from the dead inert matter.

The fact that there is uniformity in nature and that all natural phenomena take place in strict regularity and harmony, instead of dispensing with the need of God, is, on the other hand, a strong reason for believing in the existence of God. The presence of order and harmony require the incessant activity and agency of God. It is wrong to think that God after making our physical world once out of primordial matter, ceases to have any connection with the working of that world and practically becomes "Akarma" as far as the working of our physical world is concerned."

The indications of his activity are present everywhere.

The idea beautifully expressed in the following text of the Upanishad.

“It is by His fear that the fire burns and the Sun shines, it is by that fear that lightening and air fulfil their functions and in the fifth place death runs a far”.

(3) It is said in the third place that the coeternity of matter and souls puts limitations on the infinite powers of God, and robs him of his omnipotence. One fails to understand how matter and souls limit the power of God. On the other hand they provide a scope for the power of God to manifest itself. How can you talk of God as infinite and Almighty if there are no finite and limited beings to offer a sort of contrast to his infinite perfection? Only by positing matter and souls as co-eternal with God can you escape from the unpleasant consequence of contemplating Him as sitting idle and inactive for ages before he made up his mind to create the world?

The God, utilizing the materials already present may not be a spectacular God—you may call him finite—if it so pleases you—but he is at least not an absurd God, to which unenviable position he is reduced by his friends—the creationists.

(4) Some people put the question as to how God came to know the attributes of matter and have control over it. It is really difficult to understand how the mere co-eternity of matter can deprive God of the possibility of knowing what matter is and of exercising control over it. They forget that *God is omnipotent and omniscient. He is omnipotent and therefore he can exercise control over matter. He is omniscient and therefore he knows the attributes of matter and an infinite number of other things besides.* This objection might have carried weight if somebody had asserted that God is without power and knowledge. *When we say that God, matter and souls are co-eternal, we mean that their attributes are also co-eternal. Matter is the substance out of which*

the evolution of the material world has open brought about. God is the supreme infinite being who brings the orderly world into manifestation out of primordial matter. God is the controller and the matter is the controlled and this relation between God and matter never had a beginning. It is eternal. Therefore the question, as to how he came to have control over matter, never arises.

(5) There is one another objection that is urged against the eternity of matter. **Martin** makes this objection in his famous book 'The study of religion.' He admits that God cannot produce everything out of the unit of itself. "I think" he says "of a cause (by this he means efficient cause) as needing something else in order to work, i.e., some condition present with it. If there is a condition requisite for the divine cause, it must from the nature of the case be already there i.e., be self-existent with him. "After having admitted the need of a condition for the divine cause to work with, he says later on that the eternal condition is space and not matter and the reason why it cannot be matter is given by him as follows. If you regard matter as the co-eternal condition it must always have the properties of inertia, resistance etc., however refined and attenuated it might be. The possession of resistance and inertia indicates that it has got some force or energy in it. Where would you then draw the line of distinction between the force of matter and the force imparted by God to matter. So it is better to give up matter and retain space as the primary condition of divine causality.

It is strange logic. Since you cannot draw a dividing line between the force already possessed by matter and the force exercised upon it by God, therefore matter does not exist. Is the mere inability to draw a dividing line enough to condemn matter to non-existence? Moreover, what is there to show that the force possessed by matter is of the same quality as the force of God. Why is **Martin** so much

interested in depriving matter of the last iota of force: If matter is really something, it must make its existence felt in the form of negative force. And the mere fact that it possesses, the force to react to the operation of divine causality does not in any way lower the dignity of God himself. Everything that exists must have some force in it, otherwise it cannot exist. Qualitatively and quantitatively the force of matter bears no comparison with the force of God.

The Vedic theory of evolution—According to the Vedic doctrine, primordial matter, before the evolution of the world begins, exists in a refined or rarefied state. All the three *Gunas of Prakriti*, *Satvas*, *Rajas* and *Tamas* are in a state of dissolution and disintegration, leading to a sort of equilibrium. When God desires the evolutionary process to begin, he gives a sort of initial disturbance to the equilibrated *Prakriti*, and as a result, the material atoms having the different attributes of *Satva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas*, begin to aggregate unequally in different proportions and thus the creation of the manifold is brought about. The original state of *Prakarti* is a state of homogeneity, and indifferentiation. In the words of **Dr. Seal**, the process of evolution consists in the development of the differentiated (*Vaisamya*) within the indifferentiated (*Samya Avastha*) of the determinate (*Visesa*) within the indeterminate (*Avishesh*) of the coherent (*Yuta Siddha*) within the incoherent (*Ayuta Siddha*). According to Herbert Spencer also the order of succession is from a relatively less complex, and less differentiated to a relatively more complex and more differentiated.

The first form, assumed by *Prakriti*, after the original disturbance, was that of Ether or *Akash*. It is the first stage in the evolution. As the particles of matter come closer, Ether is transformed into a gaseous form called *Vayu*. It is what the western philosophers call the nebular state. As yet differentiation and complexity have not gone very far. The

nebula or the Prakriti in the form of *Vayu*, rotates at a tremendous velocity. As a result of rotation many rings are detached from the main body of the Gaseous *Prakriti* and take determinate forms to be solidified afterwards into the sun, the moon, the earth, the stars, and other celestial bodies. These detached portions of the Nebulae also continue rotating. As a result great heat and light are generated so that, *Prakriti* now assumes a luminous form. The third stage therefore is that of *Agni* or luminosity. In course of time the State of luminosity is no longer maintained, but matter still continues to be in a molten condition, on account of the great heat. There was a time when our earth was also in a molten state. It is the liquid or, *jal* stage of evolution. As long as our earth was in a molten condition, it could not maintain living bodies on its surface. There were no plants or animals inhabiting the earth at that stage. The heat gradually cooled off, and the characteristic of solidity or *Prithvi* was added on to the other attributes already acquired by matter in course of its evolution. After the earth had cooled down, and had become structurally fit for living beings to live on it, there appeared plants and animals of all varieties. Souls, which are eternal like *Prakriti*, could conjoin themselves to material bodies only after suitable environmental conditions had been provided for them and after matter had reached in certain portions, a highly complex state of organisation to admit of conjunction with souls.

We are not, however, to think that all souls began life in the same way or were joined to similar bodies. They were given different bodies on account of the fact that their *Karmas* were not absolutely the same. The Vedic theory believes in cycles of evolution. This cosmos is not the first of its kind. When it has run down its course, when the sun, has cooled off and remains no longer able to sustain the animal and vegetable creation with its light and heat, it would end in

dissolution. The Gunas will again disintergrate and attain to a state of equilibrium. The souls, in whatever stages of evolution they might be, would become quiescent waiting to be re-animated in bodily form in the next cycle of evolution. Thus it is clear that when the cycle begins afresh, the souls, which had already accumulated different *Karmas*, towards the end of the previous cosmic period are born with different capacities in different bodies thus giving rise to a variety of species. The question whether all the species that are now found on the face of the earth were produced simultaneously in the beginning of the creation, or, whether some were produced in the beginning and others came later on, does not concern us here. It may be left to the speculation of the philosophers. Both possibilities can be accommodated in the Vedic theory of evolution. It is quite possible that only simpler species were produced at first, because the conditions that obtained at that time were unsuitable to the existence of species of more complex organisation. And as conditions settled down to a state of greater security and adaptability, higher species gradually appeared on the earth. The other question, which is in a way connected with the previous one is as to how these new species that came later, were produced. Were they developed out of the previously existing species according to the law of variations as the Darwinians suggest or were they produced by an act of spontaneous generation? We think this question follows closely upon the heels of the second, and, may be left open to the discussion of Philosophers. In any case the Vedic theory of evolution can remain equally valid; whether the one or the other supposition is accepted as an explanation of the appearance of different species on the face of the earth.

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Chapter - 6

(A) THE PROBLEM OF EVIL

The existence of evil in the world is a fact which no body can deny. Man at a low level of culture accepts the presence of evil and directs his energies to its eradication as far as it lies in his power. He has neither the intellectual capacity nor the inclination to enquire into the origin and the significance of evil. As human reflection develops, man is puzzled more and more to see the wide diffusion of evil and it is quite natural for him at this stage to seek some rational explanation of this most important phenomenon. The main question, therefore, with which we are concerned in this chapter, is to investigate the origin of evil and to find out its bearing on the existence of God. We shall also inquire as to the underlying significance of evil for the promotion of the animate good as a whole..

The two main forms of evil—Evil is generally divided in to natural evil and moral evil. To the first class belong those events that take place as the result of the working of natural forces and which thwart the fulfilment of man's purposes and needs. The barrenness of soil, that condemns people to abject poverty, extremes of climate that divitalize a nation, floods, draughts, hurricanes, and other natural occurances that come like a swarm of locusts upon man and cause great miseries and hardships are well known instances of natural evil. Pain, disease and death are our common heritage and are the causes sometimes of extreme suffering. A few sentences from **Mill's** 'Essay on nature' may be quoted

below. "In sober truth, nearly all the things for which men are hanged or imprisoned for doing to one another are nature's everyday performances. Killing the most for criminal acts recognized by human laws, nature does once to every being that is alive. Next to taking life is taking the means by which we live. A single hurricane destroys the hopes of a season, a flight of locusts or an inundation desolates a district, a trifling chemical change in an edible root starves a million of people." It is no doubt true that these evils are spread in human and animal world alike. We also find that many dreadful bacilli grow in nature that carry the germs of diseases far and wide. There are also a multitude of ferocious animals equipped with effective organs, that stalk about in the jungles making other living beings their prey, killing and devouring them. The world of nature presents a horrible scene of slaughter and carnage. In addition to this the laws of nature, in course of their operation, cause widespread havoc and destruction. "The tidal wave, the volcanic out burst, the earthquake sometimes deal destruction to thousands of human lives and leave appalling misery in their train". Can all these catastrophes, a man might ask, be reconciled with the idea of a just and benevolent God? Is it possible to believe that ultimately some good will come out of this evil? Does such suffering prove of any benefit to those that suffer or to those that come after them?

While talking of these natural evils, we should not also forget the vagaries in the distribution of good and evil, that we find in this world. Is it not a common spectacle that while the wicked prosper, the virtuous have to put up with all sorts of hardships and privations? "The industrious father of a family is smitten down by disease when his help could least be spared while the selfish idle enjoys excellent health".

Instances of like nature can be multiplied to any length, to illustrate the heedlessness and extreme callousness of

nature in the distribution of pains and pleasures to the earthly creatures.

Beside natural evils we have moral evils. The latter appears in two forms as sensuality and selfishness. Sensuality is a common term implying all the weaknesses and vices that result from a complete surrender to the sensuous impulses. A sensuous man hurls reason and decency overboard and welters in the quagmire of carnal pleasures and animal passions. Intemperance, dissipation, indolence, debauchery, cowardice, self-distrust are some of the vices that follow in the train of sensuality. Selfishness, proteus like, takes a large number of forms, and, when abnormally developed in an individual, makes him an enemy of social well-being and incites him to carry on a perpetual warfare with the other members of the community, to which he belongs. Injustice, cruelty, malice, envy, haughtiness, dishonesty are the various forms in which selfishness manifests itself. Selfishness is a social crime. It leads to the exploitation of the poor by the rich. The unscrupulous and the clever suck the life blood of the ignorant, simple minded folk. Nations engage into the brutal task of mutual extermination. International wars, sectarian persecutions, unheard miseries and social corruptions owe their origin to the abnormal development of selfishness. The phenomena of sin and immorality are common in all strata of society. 'How can you account for this moral depravity and vice', is a question that any man may put to a religious philosopher who undertakes to vindicate the ways of God to man.

The significance of evil

Before we take up the question as to how evil has originated, it is well-worth discussing the role that evil plays in the economy of nature. Does evil always remain an evil or is there any possibility of its transmutation into good? Is there any truth in the statement that evil in most cases serves

the ends of individual efficiency and social welfare?

In the first place, we must remember that evil is a relative term. It has no meaning apart from good. They imply each other. For the most part, the world in which we live is perfectly adapted to our needs and our nature. It provides the necessary conditions for our growth. What we call evil is essential to our health and efficiency? "Take away all evils and you take away life itself." Taking in the first place, normal impediments and hardships, it is easy to see that in their absence all bodily and mental activities would come to a stand-still. If all the wants could be fulfilled by the mere act of wishing and no efforts, whatsoever, were required to satisfy them, man would deteriorate physically and spiritually. If the soil yielded harvests and fruits of its own accord; if the climatic conditions were perfectly adjusted to the comforts of man, where would you find that virility and rigour of manhood that are the outcome of man's constant struggle against the hostile forces of nature. There would be no agriculture or any of the numberless arts and industries that give zest to life. In the absence of these natural obstacles and hardships, our lives would be reduced to a succession of vagabondage, empty chattering and meaningless frivolity. In such a world where all the desires of man could be gratified instantaneously without even the minimum of effort, there would be more cases of suicide and more cases of immature, early deaths, than we have now. *It is not work that kills, it is the want of work that kills most men.* "If tools of all kinds grew upon trees or shoes fell from heaven once a year, we should need no trades—we should be living in Utopia"—a mere dream land.

We often repudiate all sorts of pain without caring to understand that pain in most cases is a necessary element in the preservation of life. How nice it would be if our bodies were to become immune from or insensitive to pain. Just try

to imagine the consequences that might happen if such desires were fulfilled. The result of the insensitivity to pain would be that we shall plunge our hand into fire, or expose ourselves to the extreme cold of the arctic regions, without feeling the slightest inconvenience. In the present economy of nature, as soon as we plunge our hand into fire, we feel pain and instantly withdraw it. According to the altered state of things, our hand or in fact our whole body might be burnt to ashes and we would never know it. As we are at present constituted, a slight pin-prick produces pain and we at once set about removing the cause of that pain, but if our bodies were to become insensitive to pain, anybody might begin cutting our throats at his leisure, while we were asleep without causing us any inconvenience or even rousing us from our slumber. Pain is nature's warning that always keeps us on the alert, and makes us avoid fatal experience. It is the pain in the stomach that tells us that we have got indigestion and so we should avoid any further injection of unnecessary food. Pain is our great saviour. It is pain that keeps life going on from day to day. It is the pain and hardship involved in the doing of a thing that make it so sweet for us. One, who has taken pains says, "We prize the products of the soil, because we have acquired them by the sweat of our brow. We would not prize truth as we do, if it were to fall into our laps without any effort on our part."

The laws of nature, in the course of their working, occasionally cause hardships and calamities. These laws operate uniformly and in their uniform behaviour, are a source of great good to living beings. It would be quite eccentric on our part to demand that these laws should suspend their uniform behaviour, when our personal and temporary interests are at stake. It would mean that fire should sometimes, burn and sometimes produce a cooling sensation, and that the law of gravity should work and not work at

different times. Different individuals would desire the working of these laws in opposite directions at the same time and as a result of colliding interests. We shall have disruption instead of harmony. Earthquakes, hurricanes floods etc. are natural phenomena just as the falling of rain and the growing of corn are natural. They sometimes cause devastation but they also cause a lot of good. Moreover, man can by the use of his intelligence, counteract the evil effect of most of the natural phenomena. These laws, as is well known are necessary to the existence of man and this becomes apparent, when we consider, how impossible it would become for man to live, if there were no constancy and therefore, no reliability in the processes of nature. Some people might object that God in the omnipotence of his nature should have so arranged that the laws of nature might have operated uniformly without causing the least injury to any living being. It is demanding an impossibility. It cannot happen that the same law should work uniformly and also satisfy each and every individual. The interests of mankind clash with one another and the same law cannot simulataneously serve the desires of different persons.

And the same may be said, about death. It is sometimes regarded as the greatest of natural evils. There is a great mystery as to what happens to a soul after death. Does death mean the total extinction of consciousness, or is it simply a passage from one life to another? This doubt and scepticism about the maintenance of continuity after death, is the main cause of the superstitious dread with which men contemplate the contingency of the approaching death. The pangs of death are said to be the most fearful ever experienced. This view is the outcome of gross ignorance. We go through more painful experiences many a time in our life. We do not mind them much because we continue living. Acute stomach-ache, or the pain of a burning wound, are in point of intensity, not

less than any, experience at the time of death. It is also a well-known fact that actual pain taken in itself is not as tormenting as when it is coupled with the anticipation of pain. In this respect lower animals are at an advantage as compared to man. The calamity of man is greatly heightened by the fear of the approaching disaster, that begins to haunt him long before the calamity actually overtakes him. This element of anticipation, that increases manifold actual experience of misery is absent from the lives of lower animals. Keeping this fact in view, it can be safely asserted that the amount of the actual pain suffered by the lower animals is not so great as is made out in the glowing and highly coloured descriptions of some interested writers, about the universal carnage that obtains in the sub-human kingdoms.

Death, of which we were talking above is also a natural phenomenon and is implied in the very structure of organic bodies. Life would not be practicable without it. To the individual in the morning freshness of his powers, death may appear as a great calamity, but when the race is run and the life's task ended, death is looked upon as the natural close to our life-long labours."

If a man were forced to live forever, I am sure he would not endure it. It would be a fate more terrible than death. After living a certain number of years, the zest for life remains no longer keen. Fixed and stereotyped habits are formed, and the man, with every advancing year finds himself a misfit in the ever changing social environment. He feels that he is out of place in a world that has changed, and there can be no greater misery than feeling oneself out of place, day in and day out.

I have said above that the fear of death is for the most part due to the mystery that clings round it and to the uncertainty of existence after death. To a man, who believes

in the immortality of soul and in the continuity of life, death does not appear as an object of mortal dread.

We might say in passing that most of the miseries that befall mankind are brought upon themselves as a result of their own perversity and ignorance. Some mention might be made here of the moral evils, which are the special paraphernalia of human society. Man is endowed with a large number of natural tendencies and instincts. He is also gifted with reason and will by means of which he can regulate his tendencies and impulses for himself. If the instincts are directed in the proper channels under the guidance of reason, the result would be a perfect harmony and a complete self-expression of all that is best in man. If on the other hand the dictates of reason are passed unheeded and passions are allowed to have full sway, it would lead to moral anarchy and ruin. Man is born free, and some price must be paid for this boon of freedom. You cannot have it both ways in your favour. If you want to keep intact your freedom, you must also be prepared to accept the responsibility of making the right use of that freedom.

We must not, however, ignore the fact that natural propensities, if properly controlled, lead to the ultimate good of man. Even the vices are so many stepping stones to the highest virtue. In battling with temptations and vices, men grow strong in virtues. The heroes, of whom we read in history, became what they were, only by struggling with evil. Just imagine what the condition of mankind could be if they were all born perfectly virtuous and good. In the first place virtue would cease to have any meaning and value, since there would be nothing to contrast it with. All would be reduced to a dull level of equality. There would be no struggle, no aspiration, no triumphs of virtue over the opposing elements. Human life instead of ever renewing itself by fresh encounters with temptation and hostile

elements, would grow into a stagnant and insipid thing deprived of moral fervour and enthusiasm. The virtues of justice, benevolence, prudence and courage cannot grow in an atmosphere free from the stirrings of human passions and sensuous impulses.

We have tried to show that most of the evils, that we see about us, are not without their bright sunny side which we never think off, when talking glibly of the evils and miseries of life. I do not mean to say that all evils can be thus vindicated. Moreover the evil in the world can be justified only in a general way. "It will always be impossible" as a certain writer says "to point out the teleological necessity of a particular evil in a particular case, just as physics cannot explain the casual necessity of every particular movement, but it may be shown that human historical life, with all the truly valuable elements it contains, as a rule, demands the very conditions under which evil actually exists. Take away all evils and you abolish life itself."

In this section, we have attempted an enquiry into the significance of evil. It is clear however that all the evils can not be thus vindicated. Moreover the justification of an evil is not the same thing as its explanation. The former implies the liability or potentiality of an evil to serve some higher purpose, the latter tries to give the origin of the phenomenon. Unless we completely explain the origin of evil we cannot be said to know any thing definitely about it. There are many evils so monstrous that they defy all justifications. Complete intellectual satisfaction can be obtained only if we succeed in finding out how evil originated. There can be no question as to the existence of evil in the world. The author of the Sankhya system of philosophy opens the discourse, by classifying the different, kinds of evils that exist in the world, and describes as the goal of human life, the attainment of freedom from the various kinds of evil. Evil exists. It would

not do to call it an illusion and therefore our main task now is to discuss the origin of evil.

The origin of evil—The metaphysical question, as to why evil should exist in the world at all is a very pertinent question. Most people regard the problem of evil as an effective argument against the existence of God. If God exists, why should there be evil at all? Sometimes the problem of evil becomes so acute and distressing that even a man of unswerving faith deems it necessary to think over the matter. In the face of these conditions it becomes very important to seek for some rational explanation of this discordant phenomenon.

Pantheism and evil—The theory of pantheism cuts the gordian knot by denying evil altogether. Evil is phenomenal—a mere appearance, and there is no reality in it. It is the outcome of *Maya* or ignorance. As soon as spiritual illumination sets in, evil instantly vanishes, just as dream images disappear as soon as we wake up from our slumber. To call evil an illusion amounts to an indirect confession that no explanation can be given. It requires the specially equipped brain of a Vedantist to realize that the acute sufferings of the millions of famine stricken people, taking the gruesome forms of torturing diseases, and horrible deaths are mere illusions. It is impossible to convince a man, who has received a deep wound, caused by a sword thrust, that the pain, of which he is suffering is the outcome of mere ignorance and that instead of calling a surgeon, he should meditate upon the oneness of soul and God. Of course nobody can deny that heroic souls endure pain with equanimity and perfect self possession, but no one can have the boldness to assert that pain does not exist or that what we illusion-stricken people call pain, effects a saint as pleasure would effect us. Even as an illusion, pain exists and is highly disagreeable and the most zealous advocate of the *Maya* theory, when

asked to choose between pain and pleasure, would most unhesitatingly accept the latter. If pain is the result of ignorance, where has this ignorance come from? Has it sprung from the absolute in its unguarded moments or does it form a part of its nature? Is it an extraneous principle co-eternal with *Brahma*? I remember to have read a quotation from **Swami Ram Tirath** somewhere, that if Vedant could give a satisfactory explanation of the phenomenon of ignorance or *Maya*, it would become irrefutable and unassailable, and we may add since no such explanation has ever been given or can possibly be given, *the theory of Vedanta is consequently the weakest of all philosophical systems*. It raises its head again and again in the history of philosophy and invariably breaks against the bed-rock of the problem of ignorance and evil. As it cannot account for ignorance, it cannot explain the existence of evil also.

Hegel, the founder of modern idealism, regards the real or the absolute as rational. The dialectic method which he regards as the keynote of philosophical method, requires unreason (as the opposite of reason), to give rise to a higher synthesis of truth or reality. This unreason or evil is indispensable for the evolution of the universe. The reason is not a separate entity according to Hegel, it is implied in the rational nature of the absolute, just as shadow is implied in the very existence of a physical object. Evil forms a necessary stage in the development of a soul. It is 'good in the making' and contributes to the harmony and perfection of the whole. In the words of **Professor Bosanquet** "Evil, one might say is good in the wrong place. There is nothing in evil which cannot be absorbed in Good, and made contributory to it, and *it springs from the same source as good and value*" (Italics ours). The last part of the quotation is significant. Good and evil both spring from the Absolute. This view, may be open to many objections, but it is at least

more co-herent and outspoken than the other view which regards *Brahma* as the only real being and then by an extraordinary feat smuggles *Maya* or ignorance from some inexplicable source.

The way of virtue, according to this view, lies through sin. Sin appears to be jarring and discordant from a partial and incomplete point of view. Just as shade and light both are necessary to make up a picture, and contribute to the beauty of the whole, sin and virtue, similarly are essential elements in the life and harmony of the whole. Let us take for granted that sin is a necessary stage in the realization of Virtue. But plausible though it is, the theory does not explain the fact why sin should weigh heavily upon one man and not upon the other. The sin of one man may do good to others, but what good does it do to the man whose life is sinful. The life of a young man, who sinks down in profligacy and crime and thereby ruins himself completely, may be an object of warning to others, but what of the life that has been ruined. Does the life of a man possess no value in itself? Is man only a means and not an end in himself? No body can have any reason to be satisfied with a lot like that, to be made a scape-goat in the interests of the rest of the universe. Leaving this case aside, there occur cases of crime and immorality almost every day in all cities which cannot be honestly regarded as sources of blessing to anybody or any community living in that locality. Evil and good are often compared to the light and shade of a picture. A picture has no consciousness, and light and shade effect it equally, if they affect the picture at all. But no human being can view with equanimity the prospect of having to do with the shade always while the element of light falls to the lot of somebody else. We thus find that the view of the rationality of evil fares very badly and breaks down completely, when we are brought face to face with the concrete facts of experience.

Christian or Islamic. Thiesm and Evil—We have already dealt with it to some extent, in the previous chapter. The creation theory of Christianity or of Islam proves helpless in giving any explanation of the existence of evil. The upholders of this type of thiesm believe in the ethical and spiritual nature of God and therefore cannot regard him as directly responsible for evil. At the same time they regard him as the creator of matter with all its potentialities for evil and of the souls with their predilection for vice and temptations. On theistic premises, therefore, it is not possible to absolve God from all responsibility for evil. The matter can be stated very simply as follows. There was nothing before God created this world. He could have created, if he had liked, a world different from the one that he actually created. The world, that he really chose to bring into existence, is full of imperfections, evils and vices, or if you want to put it in a different way, he chose to bring into existence the conditions which made moral as well as natural evil possible. Could he not have prevented the appearance of these evils? Let us give a very wide concession to the creationists and admit, for the sake of argument that the natural evils were willingly conditioned by God, as a means to a greater good. But what can you say about the moral evils? Were profligacy, debauchery, crime and other forms of moral evil also willed by God as instrumental to the general good? Did he really want that his creatures should be licentious and should cut the throats of one another? Is it of God's willing that the stronger individuals exploit and prey upon the weaker ones? Sometimes efforts are made to explain moral evil by asserting that God created souls as free-beings and moral evil is therefore the direct outcome of the freedom of human souls and does not owe its existence to God's agency. We have already indicated that freedom and creation are mutually contradictory terms. A created soul can never

be free. Let us suppose for the time being that he gave the freedom. But why did he not give them similar powers for making the right use of freedom? This question is very relevant to the whole issue. Why did God make some individuals such that they could use their freedom for attaining virtue while others were created to drift into evil ways? Why should some souls be created in conditions where the attainment of virtue is comparatively easy and why should others—and their number is much larger—be born in the most repulsive and discouraging circumstances which are more favourable to the growth of vice rather than virtue. Why does God give thus unequal start in the race of life, and then hurl a large number of people into hell for no fault of their own? If God created all souls, why did he make some of them exceptionally bright and others extremely dull and idiotic? Some people may be inclined to think of it as a clear case of God's favouritism. Others may take it as an instance of God's helplessness and imbecility. In any case, the problem of evil remains completely unexplained, according to this theory.

The Vedic theory of evil—We have already indicated in the last chapter *that matter, souls and God are the three eternal principles of the universe*. The attributes of each are different from those of the other. Matter is characterized by inertia and passivity. Souls are eternally endowed with intelligence capable of various degrees of spiritual development. Souls are finite and limited as compared to God who is infinite, omni-potent and omniscient. God makes this universe out of passive inert matter. It is apparent, that matter, out of which the world is made, must leave its impression upon the structure of the world. It is the source of all natural imperfections that are found in this universe. Being a self existent principle, it puts limitations on the infinite power of God. Given matter as it is with all attributes

and characteristics, no other kind of world, than that which actually exists, could be expected from an infinite and omnipotent diety, who would have made a better world, if better world could have been made with the given materials. If the universe has undergone all the necessary stages of evolution, before assuming the present form, and if even now various transformations are taking place in the structural constitution of the world, these facts can be easily explained on the theory that matter with its inertness and passivity could not have assumed the orderly and coherent form, without the lapse of countless millions of years. The difficulties rather lie in the way of creationism, which has to explain as to why God, who created the world with the fiat of his will did not create a better world, free from imperfections and evils.

Besides matter, there are also souls which are eternal and follow the laws of their own being. God helps them in the task of gradual self realization and spiritual development and they have to pass through many stages before they can reach the status of human beings, after which the rate of progress towards spiritual realization becomes accelerated. Some impatient critics might cry out, "Why does God, if he is omnipotent allow this tardy and slow evolution, which may take an incredibly long time for completion." They forget that souls are eternal with a finite and limited nature which is also eternal, and even God cannot make souls other than they are. Making them other than they are, would tantamount annihilating them and creating something new out of elements that are not there. It would be coming to creationism by another route with all its short comings and imperfections.

Some people think that since souls develop according to their own laws, the presence of God for their welfare becomes superflous. It is not really so. They require the help of God at every step. Their intelligence is limited and even as they develop, they cannot choose the line of evolution

without the incessant help of God. He helps them, therefore, in their evolution by conjoining them with bodies suited to the stage of their development and putting them in conditions which may contribute to the further unfoldment and explication of their powers. This process of gradual accession to their powers continues till they reach the status of man. At this stage, they become self-conscious, while formerly they were merely conscious. They are now in a position to understand the end or goal towards which they are gradually progressing. The sense of freedom, which was so long implicit, now becomes explicit, and with the dawning of the consciousness of freedom, there also appears for the first time, the sense of responsibility. They now begin to realize that whatever deeds they perform, they are invariably and inevitably followed by certain consequences. Good and evil to some extent pass under the control of the evolving and progressing souls.

After this long and somewhat tedious preamble it is now perfectly clear *that evil and imperfections are not the work of God, nor are they to be dismissed as mere illusions. They are undeniably the actual facts of the universe and can be accounted for, as the result of the limitations and finiteness of matter and souls.* Finite and limited beings exclude one another. Exclusion brings about a clash between different interests and the conflict inevitably leads to pain and suffering. That there should be clash and interaction between different souls at all stages of their evolution is but natural. This clash, while it entails much pain and suffering, also proves a contributory factor in the spiritual development of the souls. Suffering is the condition of progress. The realization of spirit is not a smooth or uninterrupted advance. "The hard flints must come into violent conflicts before they can produce the sparks of fire," and yet according to the theory which we are propounding God cannot be held

responsible for the existence of evil. Imperfections cannot but arise out of the inert nature of matter and the conflict of souls with one another on account of their finite and gradually evolving condition. As already indicated souls require to be conjoined to matter for the realisation of their potential capacities and yet it is this conjunction with matter that is the cause of suffering and pain. The chaotic elements of matter, however, have been so arranged, that they ultimately work to the good of the souls in spite of the pain and hardships which they entail. In the economy of nature good and pleasant do not seem to be always going hand in hand. Sometimes good chooses pain for its companion. "It is well with him who chooses the good, the man who chooses the pleasant, misses, the aim." The existence of pain however is inevitable, keeping in view the conditions in which the souls have to work out their salvation. The matter to be wondered at is not, that there should be evil and suffering in the world, but rather that the discordant elements of nature should be so harmonized, that evil instead of hindering the march of progress, should be made subservient to the interests of the whole and be ultimately transmuted into universal good.

(B) THE LAW OF '*KARMA*'

The law of *Karma* tries to account for the unequal distribution of evil and pain in the world. It is the most important spiritual law in the whole domain of Hindoo metaphysics. As **Professor Radhakrishnan** says in "The Philosophy of Upanishads" "The law of *Karma* is the counterpart in the moral world of the physical law of uniformity. It is the law of the conservation of moral energy. According to the law of *Karma*, there is nothing uncertain or capricious in the moral world." We often talk of many events as accidental. They are not really so. Chance is ruled out of court and

everything is regarded as taking place according to fixed laws.

According to the law of *Karma*, we reap the fruits of our actions. Even the most trivial action, leaves its effect in the character of the agent. Thus our characters are being daily fashioned by our actions however trifling and insignificant that may appear to be. You may perform an act or withhold yourself from doing so but if once you have done it, even God cannot prevent the effect from manifesting itself in due course of time. The law of *Karma* renders impossible any arbitrary interference with moral evolution.

Every action leads to a two fold effect, subjective and objective. Apart from modifying the character of the individual, it also produces its natural effect in the external world. With every action that we perform, we change ourselves as well as the world in which we live. A tyrant, while degrading his own character, at the sametime produces certain disagreeable changes in the world and these changes react upon him in the form of pain and suffering. A wicked man taints his own personality and also makes the lives of others miserable. According to the law of *Karma* he cannot escape from the painful reactions of the effects of his actions as reflected in the lives of the others. No body can injure others with impunity. The effects of a man's actions are, as they were registered in his own mental constitution as well as in the objective world outside, and sooner or later in this life or after they come back to him in the form of joy or suffering with the inevitable necessity of a natural law. The present unequal distribution of happiness and suffering is not a mere freak or eccentricity of nature. It is in each individual case the direct outcome of the actions that a man has performed in this life or in the previous life. Limited beings as we are, we cannot point out in each separate case, the connection between the actual happiness or the suffering

of a man and the particular actions that issued in those agreeable or disagreeable consequences. We can simply describe the working of the law in general terms. Even a scientist cannot assign the physical cause of each and every movement that takes place in the world. It does not imply that the movement is without a cause. In the same way the particular kind of life that a man is leading, is the resultant of the action of many factors some of which we know while others are beyond the range of our calculations. As a man passes by a certain building, it tumbles down in a crash and the man dies under the weight of the falling stones and debris. Was the death of that man a mere accident? The building fell down in accordance with certain physical laws and the engineers will tell you what laws are. Was there no law working in the death of that man? Why should he and no other person, meet death in this tragic fashion? We of course call it an accident, and the reason is that our insight into all the factors involved in each particular case is extremely meagre.

The law of *Karma* lays great emphasis on the conservation of values—no moral spiritual or mental attainments of a living being can be destroyed. A man may die, but his moral and mental acquisitions will remain with him in the form of mental tendencies, and will sprout forth in the next birth. An ant may be crushed under your feet; but the stage of mental evolution, at which it has arrived will not be set back in any case.

The law of *Karma* is not a positive discouragement in the way of social service as most people believe it to be. On the other hand the law insists on social and disinterested service as the only means of getting out of the bondage of action. If I cannot mitigate the sufferings of a person, which have come to him as the natural consequence of his own deeds, where lies the point in asking me to extend my helping

hand to him? My help is positively useless. This view is the outcome of a grave misunderstanding. The evil consequences must visit the man, but can I not prevent that unfortunate person from being crushed under the weight of the calamity that has befallen him? Of course the law of *Karama* must have its way, but the effects of the law working in one field of operation can be counteracted by the operation of the same law in another field. If you push the table in one direction and I push it in another, the table remains stationary. The effect of the working of the law of gravity is being counteracted by the working of the same law in the opposite direction. The same thing happens in the operation of the law of *Karma*. As a consequence of the evil deeds, a man must suffer pain, but I can initiate a new *Karma* by choosing to help him and in this way the effect of the other man's deeds is counteracted by the effect of the new *Karma* that I have set in operation. It is not that the law has ceased to work. It is now working only under more complicated conditions.

We must remember, however, that we are not blind, helpless tools in the hands of the law of *Karma*. *The law simply says that every cause must have its effect.* Every act is the necessary outcome of antecedent circumstances. If the man does not assert his freedom, every action of his life can be completely accounted for by the past deeds and the present environments. But man is a free being. He is mightier than the law of *Karma*. His life is not mechanically determined from first to last. There is the spiritual initiative in him and as a result of his freedom, he can control his natural impulses and make them subservient to the ultimate good of his life. If the life of man were a sum total of material conditions, he would be completely subject to the law of *Karma*. The spiritual part of his nature is incessantly waging war against mechanical determination by bringing itself nearer and nearer

to God, the fountain-head of moral and spiritual values. "The more we live in the presence of God, the more we assert the rights of spirit, the more free we are." As long as man oscillates between nature and spirit, he is subject to both freedom and necessity.

The law of *Karma* does not dispense with the necessity of God's existence. Just as the physical laws are the manifestation of God's will and power, in the same way the law of *Karma* is the expression of the nature of reality and maintains order and harmony in the moral worlds as the physical laws maintain order and harmony in the physical world. The law of *Karma* cannot work of itself without the incessant activity of God. Divine activity is demonstrated by fixed laws. There is uniformity everywhere. Arbitrary interference can no longer be thought of, "If miracles are necessary to prove God, then Science has killed God for all time".

The doctrine of law of *Karma* is very useful in the practical life of man. It teaches resignation to the past and inspires hope for the future. It solves all intellectual difficulties and gives a complete explanation of the existence of evil and the fact of the equal distribution of pain and happiness in the world.

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Chapter - 7

THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

It is not enough for us to know that God exists, we should also have an adequate conception of the nature of God. We must have some idea of the attributes that can be predicated in respect of the divine being. Of course, limited beings as we are, we cannot have a complete understanding of all the attributes. At the same time we cannot say that we know absolutely nothing about him. That would be an indirect way of denying his existence altogether. In this chapter, we shall try to indicate briefly some of the characteristics, that our thought necessarily invests the deity with, in order that our conception may be adequate or self-consistent. It is not implied that our thought arbitrarily selects the contents of the idea of Divinity. If we accept the position, that God is the maker of the universe, it follows as a matter of necessity that he should possess certain predicates or attributes, consistent with the notion of a supreme being who brings this universe into manifestation.

We might refer here to the view of **Spencer** that the absolute or God as he is in himself, is unknowable. Human thought is relative, we always think of objects in their relation to ourselves, i.e., from our own point of view, and not as they really are. This argument can be traced back to Kant, according to whose epistemological doctrine, we can only know phenomena and not things as they really are. Theoretical reason is quite incompetent to penetrate into the heart of reality. It is mere presumption to believe that we

can know the infinite by the help of our finite reason. In fact we cannot weigh the infinite in the balance of the finite "Though the absolute" Spencer says "cannot in any manner or degree be known in the strict sense of knowing, yet we find that its positive existence as necessary datum of consciousness, and so long as consciousness continues, we cannot for an instant get rid of its datum." In simple language it means, God exists but we cannot know it. This view is open to many objections. In the first place, if no knowledge of God is possible how do we know that God exists. The arguments consist of two elements which when closely examined turn out to be self-contradictory. Secondly, if finite beings cannot know anything about the infinite how has the idea of infinite come to be present in our consciousness at all. If we know no other than finite existences, we should in that case never know or be able to characterise them as limited. The idea of finite is impossible without the idea of infinite. In order to say that our knowledge is finite, we should have some standard to which the finite knowledge may be referred, and which may serve as the corrective of our limited point of view, "In so far as animals are devoid of reason, they are unconscious of their irrationality." It is only we, who possess reason and intelligence that can be aware of their lack of it. In the same way a being who is absolutely limited and finite in intellectual apprehension, can have no idea of the unlimited and the infinite, and yet the idea of the infinite is so clearly present in our consciousness.

The proper conclusion from the Doctrine of Herbert Spencer, as Caird says is not "that the absolute is unknowable but that no such being exists or what comes to the same thing, that the assertion of its existence is meaningless." One cannot have it both ways. Either assert that God does not exist, but if you posit the existence of God as the necessary datum of consciousness, you cannot in the

same breath, declare that God is unknowable. One can understand the position that we cannot have a complete knowledge of God. We are sure, no believer in God would be presumptuous enough to say that his knowledge of God is perfect in every respect. This would be equivalent to making an unwarranted pretension that we know as much as God himself,—a position that is untenable and absurd in the very face of it.

God as one—God is regarded as the being, who brings this world into manifestation and sustains it all along its course of evolution. Does it not follow necessarily that he is one and that there cannot be a plurality of gods who may be held as jointly responsible for the production of the Universe? We think it is necessary, at this place to refer to the well-known logical principle of parsimony that no more causes are to be admitted than are needful for the effect. We can have no objection to the plurality of Gods, if it is clearly established that 'a single all sufficient divine will' is unable to cope with the task of world formation. In fact, we believe that the manyness of divine beings, instead of being any positive help in increasing our resources to explain the constitution of the world, rather stands in the way of such an explanation. What is the relation that exists between so many Gods? Do they not limit one another by their co-existence? It is quite possible that sometimes there might take place a difference of opinion amongst the gods and then one can well imagine the fate of this poor world of ours. Where many powers exist there is always a possibility of some clash to occur at some point or the other. And if they always concur, this fact requires further explanation and elucidation.

(2) The doctrine of polytheism can only appeal to a man of the pre-scientific age. As Science advances, the idea of the unity of nature and the interrelation of its parts becomes widely diffused amongst mankind. Nature is one whole

consisting of a diversity of parts organically connected with one another. If nature is an organic whole, the God that brings this nature into manifestation must also be one. We find the same laws, working universally everywhere. It follows that nature with all its contents, is under the jurisdiction of one supreme ruler, who is one without a second, all sufficient for the purposes of the universe.

The idea of the oneness of God also precludes the necessity of positing any lower order of divine beings, who are supposed to come more intimately into touch with the inhabitants of the world. The religion of Islam countenances the existence of angels who run about with messages to and from God to all parts of the world. If God is all sufficient, the existence of these angels is a gratuitous assumption. Moreover the fact that divine messengers are so many functionaries of God, make him dependant upon them and at the same time put a distance between God and the happenings of the world. On the one hand, God is represented as a single self-existent being who creates the world with all its contents, and on the other, we have the unedifying spectacle of a helpless God leaning on the shoulders of the angels. The two sides are irreconcilable and lead to a manifest contradiction.

The polytheism that we meet with in the *Puranas* is of a different nature. The unity of God is looked upon in its three-fold aspects as creating, sustaining, and destroying aspects of the same divinity. Shiva, Vishnoo and Brahma are not inherently separate deities that preside over distinct principalities, and perform separate functions. The highly metaphorical language of these books sometimes leads one to believe that these gods have their respective jurisdictions and often come in clash with one another. Beside these three, we also come across innumerable other gods and goddesses. The names of these deities for the most part represent the diverse aspects or attributes of the one self-existent God. In the *Vedas*,

the original source of all succeeding differentiations of knowledge, the idea of a monistic God is propounded in its pure and unadulterated form. It is also inculcated that worship is due to the one, the eternal and the infinite God.

In the *Puranas* also, the various Gods and goddesses are not represented as co-existent with God and participating in the work of the creation and the sustenance of the universe. It appears that what were described as so many phases or characteristics of God in the Vedas, came to be personified and solidified into distinct deities for the purposes of worship. When we come to the *Puranas*, we find the ideas of God having undergone degeneration. Instead of the worship of one eternal God, we meet with the indiscriminate worship of a multitude of Gods and Goddesses, in distinct antagonism to the spirit and teachings of the Vedas.

God as personal—When we say that God is personal, we mean that he is a self-conscious being and of a self-determining will. Only such a being can be an object of personal reverences and love. There are some writers who object to the use of the term personality in connection with God. According to them God is the absolute being, all embracing in its nature. The personality is a development within the absolute. The absolute contains all persons in it, but is itself not the person. Self consciousness is the mark of personality and self consciousness depends on the opposition between the self and the not self. If God is a person he must depend on the not self for the realization of his personality. It makes God dependent on matter for his very existence. There is a little misunderstanding here which we must clear up. We know that the personality of man undergoes development. We can hardly speak of an infant as a person. It is only later on when he becomes distinctly aware of his powers and his relations to the inanimate and the animate beings around him that the element of personality makes its

appearance. It is no doubt true that the natural and the social environments of the child play a great part in the unfolding of his capacities. It is by contact with nature and persons that the child comes to realise completely the latent possibilities of his being. But some initial self feeling or a germ of self consciousness is always presupposed in order that personality may take root and blossom forth into complete self expression. Moreover we are here talking of self consciousness which undergoes a continuous evolution, and development always requires a foreign element that should offer resistance and thus help the process of evolution to continue without interruption. No development is possible without some resistance to be overcome.

When we talk of the personality of God, we talk of him as a complete being, who does not admit of any evolution or development in himself. We have already seen that even in the case of a finite ego, some germinal self consciousness or initial self feeling is unavoidably present, before the process of evolution actually begins.

In the case of God, who is perfect and above the process of development, the notion of personality is applicable, though he does not stand in need of the not-self for the perfection of his nature because it is already perfect.

Let us now try to put the whole thing as simply as possible. When we talk of God as personal, we mean that he is self conscious, and that he is fully cognisant of his powers. He is perfectly conversant with the thoughts of the finite selves and actively helps them in the course of their evolution and in their spiritual struggles. "It makes all the difference in the world, whether the being you call God is simply an unconscious substance or a spirit, who knows, will and loves." Religious consciousness can never be satisfied with an impersonal God or a being who has no element of personality in him who cannot enter into any spiritual

relations with human selves and of whom we cannot predicate love, justice, righteousness, many of the spiritual values that we prize so highly in our exalted moments. Panthiesm reduces God into a depersonalized substance, which is above all human categories, which is quite indifferent to human weal and woe and remains quite unaffected with human joys and sufferings, as if they did not exist at all. Such a God cannot be called spiritual also; for the spiritual and the personal cannot be divorced from each other. The higher religious idea of God is the idea according to which God reveals himself to the souls of men and does not always remain impervious to their spiritual quest for union with and realization of his divine personality in their own finite selves.

God as Infinite, Eternal, Transcendent and Immanent—A finite being means a limited being. In contrast to it, the infinite in common parlance, means the unlimited and the unbounded. It is quantitative infinite or as Hegel calls it, the bad infinite. The mere fact of unlimited spatial extension cannot add any thing to the greatness of God. Even Space, for aught we know is infinite in that sense. We cannot imagine any limits to it. We cannot refer to any point in space and say "here space ends" for we can very easily conceive the existence of space beyond that point. Time also may be regarded infinite from an empirical point of view. It extends infinitely in the past and in the future. Moreover we have no right to apply the notion of an infinite spatial extension to a being who transcends the spatial order. We shall take up more in detail, the meaning of the statement that God is present in all points of space. In the meantime it is enough for us to know that the notion of a quantitative infinite is quite inadequate to describe the infinity of a being who is self-conscious and enters into ethical and spiritual relations with human beings. Such an infinite has no religious significance

and is of no spiritual value in human souls.

The term infinite, when applied to God should be interpreted qualitatively. An infinite God means a perfect, complete and an all sufficient God. It stands in positive contrast to the finite. A finite being is one, who does not have complete ground of his own existence, who cannot remain what he is unsupported by external force or condition. A finite being is also capable of evolving; it has a possibility of development within itself. An infinite being, on the other hand, is perfect from the beginning whom the category of evolution cannot apply and who has no limitations set upon his personality. From our point of view God is limited by a world of things and persons which are other than himself. They are not limitations; they are rather incentives, so to speak, that call forth his activity. Without matter and souls. God's perfection and energy would have always remained potential and unmanifested. The idea that a perfect being should do nothing and should remain quite mute and motionless is an absurd and fictitious idea.

We have already discoursed on the eternity of God. God has no beginning in point of time nor will he have an end. The things of the world are constantly changing. They are perpetually in a state of flux and mutation. God is conceived as above all these changes, "the same yesterday and today and for ever." God is not the only being who is eternal. Matter and souls are also without a beginning and an end. But there is one important distinction between the eternity of God and the eternity of matter and souls. God is eternally perfect while souls evolve towards perfection. We cannot speak of matter as perfect or as evolving towards perfection. It is a passive, inert substance that can be moulded into order and harmony by the infinite God, and is utilized by the souls in their development to the goal involved in their very nature.

Sometimes eternity is understood to mean timelessness.

To speak of God as eternal in this sense is to put him above the time process. The idea is that the category of time cannot be applied to Him. Does it mean that temporal changes as take place in the universe, are not known to God as such? Is he completely cut off from them? Is time process a sheer illusion, which does not exist as such in the divine consciousness? To put God above all reference to timeprocess is to rob him of personality and to regard him an impersonal substance. Moreover, if time process is an illusion, the world in which we live and move is also an illusion. It would be once again involving ourselves in the difficulties and absurdities of the pantheistic system. If the world in which we live is not an illusion, the time process also cannot be a mere illusion, but a part of reality and truth and consequently God cannot be altogether unrelated to time. The changes that take place in time are known to God, and he actively participates in some of these changes from his own lofty, disinterested, super human stand-point. The idea so common amongst the absolutists that if God were to take any part in the affairs of the universe, he could no longer remain perfect, is as I have already indicated, a mere chimera, a figment, invented by the over fertile imagination of the idealistic philosophers. There is no repugnance between the idea of perfection and activity. We can conceive without involving ourselves into any inconsistency, a perfect being taking part and guiding the mundane process of transformation and evolution.

In a way we can speak of God as transcending the time process. The time process, that produces change in other beings, cannot affect any alteration in the inherent nature of God himself. He is eternally perfect as already said, and, so incapable of being affected by the temporal changes. Moreover we do not mean to imply that no change whatsoever takes place in the Divine mind. "The fact of

change is fundamental and no mind is conceivable whether human or divine which does not imply states of consciousness that change. A God absolutely removed from change might be an impersonal substance; He could not be a living and spiritual God."

The attributes of immanence and transcendence can both be applied to God. He is immanent in the world, he dwells in it and sustains it by his incessant activity. He is indwelling in the sense that the hand of his activity is visible every where. This vast and complicated machinery of nature would at once get out of order if He were to withdraw himself from actual participation in the task of sustaining and maintaining the universe. When we say that God is present in every particle of nature, we are not to understand that God is physically immanent just as atmosphere is diffused in every nook and corner of the earth on which we live. Our language generally takes the form of metaphors when we talk on the attributes of God. We should, therefore, be aware of the misunderstanding that is liable to creep in and understand the spirit, which is meant to be conveyed in the garb of metaphorical language.

According to Pantheism also God is immanent in the world. There is, however a great difference in the meaning of the word immanence as understood by Pantheism. Immanence of God in the world means the identification of God with the world. God is not simply in the world, but God is the world itself. There is consequently no transcendence, or over-stepping the bounds of the universe. Whatever is, is God. There is nothing beyond that. We do not understand immanence in this way. We do not merge the separate individualities of the material and spiritual substances into the very being of God. God is in the world and yet out of it. He is immanent in the world and also transcends it. The universe as it is, does not completely exhaust the infinite

nature of God. In this sense he is transcendent. Diests of the eighteenth century regarded Him as transcendent only. He was compared to a clock-maker, who winds the clock and has no further concern, with it for some time. Similarly the world machinery was set agoing by the perfect being in the beginning of creation, and now it goes on automatically. God having no more husiness with the world, keeps out of it and hence he cannot be said to be immanent in the world. We do not understand what gain is contemplated in keeping God out of the world which was brought into manifestation by him. The God of the Diests is active for a short time only and then he is sent to sleep for ever. It is possible to explain the transformations of matter mechanically in a clock-fashion, without the necessity of divine intervention? How can the evolution of spiritual beings, who are free and who initiate spontaneous movements, be explained on the automatic principle, with God kept in the background? Where there is spontaniety and freedom, there cannot be any absolute prevision and mechanical determination and hence the guidance of God at every step becomes necessary. We, therefore, conclude that God is immanent in the universe. He also transcends it, in the sense that his being is not completely exhausted in the activities manifested in the universe. He is beyond it because while the universe depends upon him, he does not depend upon it for the perfection of his being, nor is he identical with the world of things and persons either individually or collectively. The universe owes its order and existence to him but he does not owe his perfection or existence to the universe. Hence he is both immanent and transcendent.

God as Omnipotent—The attribute of power is a very important attribute of God. This attribute is the first to be noticed by the cultured and the illiterate alike. The phenomena of nature are for the most part an embodiment

of power and force. How could he bring into manifestation this vast and completed universe unless he possesses in himself unlimited power and potency.

The religious consciousness also demands a God who should be Omnipotent and all-powerful. We go on performing the duties and functions of life with a firm faith, that ultimately the good will prevail and that our destinies are safely placed in the hands of a Being, who has the power to punish evil and advance the cause of righteousness. If on the other hand, the conviction were to gain ground that God's power is limited and that it is just possible that He may not completely succeed in vanquishing evil and promoting good, religion in the real sense of the term, would come to stand-still. A pessimistic outlook of life would take the place of calm resignation and cheerful hope and the foundation of an optimistic faith would be shattered to pieces.

We should properly understand the meaning of the word Omnipotent. According to some people the phrase, "God is Omnipotent" means "God can do everything" or "Nothing is beyond the power of God." This interpretation of the word "Omnipotent" cannot stand a critical examination. Can God kill himself? Can he produce another being like Himself? Can he speak a falsehood? And a number of other similar questions would show the absurdity of the meaning of "Omnipotent" as given above. I am at this stage reminded of ludicrous attempts at the refutation of God's existence, made by the members of the *Dev Samaj*. "If your God is Omnipotent" they say "can he break this pencil lying on the table." The speaker waits for a second and then exclaims out in the exultation of triumph "Look here; the pencil is not broken and, therefore, there is no God or He is not omnipotent." One does not know what to do with these childish prattlings. It is enough to mention them to bring out their absurdity. One thing is clear that the brain from which these things can emanate, must be a softened brain,

enveloping within itself a very low kind of animal intelligence. They demand that God should immediately break the pencil as if he is very anxious to drive home into the brain of this dull and absurd species of humanity, the fact of his existence. Their reason is not developed enough to apprehend that the laws of God work uniformly and therefore, no miraculous intervention of any sort is possible. The age of miracles is gone, perhaps never to return. God cannot do absurd or contradictory things. Therefore the proper meaning of the world Omnipotent is, as **Swami Dayanand** has so clearly explained in his epoch-making work, the **Satyarth Parkash**, that God is powerful enough to carry out his will into manifestation without any external help. He is the self sufficient, independent ground of the existence of the universe and is not limited in the expression of his energy and force by any rival or antagonistic power. If the will of God is incapable of impossible achievements, it is no reflection on the infinity of his power. We shall be doing a great dis-service to Him by attributing to Him the power of doing what is absurd or impossible.

Some people find fault with the Omnipotence of God, because he cannot prevent the continual recrudescence of evil in the world. We have already dealt with this question at length in the chapter on the problem of evil. We shall only say that evil has its origin in the constitution of the world out of elements that have an independent existence of their own. Imperfection and Evil naturally manifest themselves in limited and finite beings and, therefore, cannot in any case be attributed to the agency of God himself.

God as Omniscient—The attribute of divine Omniscience offers a decided contrast to the limited knowledge of man. Our thought is partial and fragmentary. However much we may try, we cannot arrive at a comprehensive and complete knowledge about any object whatsoever. Our intellects are fashioned in such a way that

we can view reality from particular angles of vision only and not by an all inclusive, alround glimpse of the object as a whole. We get our knowledge, piece-meal, and the seperate bits of knowledge, thus obtained are articulated to form an organic intellectual system.

We are posted at particular points in reality. Naturally our knowledge is limited and imperfect. The knowledge of a being who is spiritually present in every point of reality; who is so to speak a centre to which the radii from all parts of the circumference converge themselves, cannot belong to the same species as ours.

We must know, however, that the type of knowledge that we have is not the only type possible. Our knowledge is discursive; we proceed slowly, step by step from one point to the other. We cannot take at a glance all the aspects of the object before us. Our mental processes of judgement and inference are very laborious and complicated. Naturally reasoning in men is a hard bit of mental effort. In human beings, themselves, we find different degree of intellectual comprehension. Some can attain to their goal without much loss of time, in single momentary effort or attention. We think of such judgements as arrived at by intuition rather than by the process of intellection. The knowledge of God belongs to this higher form of what we may call intuition. We have no other human category to express the idea completely. There is nothing inconceivable in the notion that God can know the whole at a glance. His knowledge is perfect and not discursive. All the events, so to say are reflected simulataneously in their interrelations, in the great mirror of divine consciousness. There is no defect, no partiality in his vision. He is omniscient, his knowledge is not hampered by those limitations, which are natural to the intellectual activities of mankind.

There is one very important question connected with the omniscience of God. Does he know the future as he

knows the past and the present. A great controversy has raged round this question. There are two views that hold the field. According to the first view, God is Omniscient, therefore, he must know the future, as he knows the past and the present. The second view restricts the Omniscience of God to the past and the present and does not extend it to the future. In their opinion the Omniscience of God in its complete form, and, the freedom of soul, are irreconcilable.

Those who believe that there can be no contingency or freedom in the world, and, that every event whether mental or physical takes place according to pre-ordained laws, will unhesitatingly, subscribe to the doctrine of Omniscience. Similarly, the thinkers whose opinion is that, self, though not exterminated, is always moved by self-determination in its actions, will have no difficulty in accomodating themselves to the doctrine of complete Omniscience. When we say that a soul is self-determined in its actions we mean that the present actions of the self are the result of the past actions as embodied in the character and the mental disposition of the agent. As far as the practical consequences are concerned, there is no difference between the view of self-determination and the view of complete determinism which believes in no freedom what-so-ever. Self-determinism is only a softened form of complete determinism and both forms leave no freedom to the agent what-so-ever. Both these views can be easily reconciled to the notion of complete Omniscience.

There is a third view of the freedom of the human-self. We shall simply mention it and not give any reasons for it. According to the third view man is not always determined by previously laid character. To act merely in accordance with character is not pledge of freedom and does not serve to distinguish between a man who is master of himself and the man who is verily a slave of his brutal passions. Both are determined by their character. Self-determination does not

leave open possibilities to an agent. He can act only in one way as demanded by character and therefore he is not free in the real sense of the term. The third view then insists in opposition to the other two views already mentioned, that man can occasionally start new beginnings, which are quite unexpected and not in line with the previously acquired mental tendencies. Spiritual development does not proceed in a series of casually determined actions. Even wicked man may be suddenly transformed into a saint and this mutation can in no way be explained by reference to the character that already belongs to him. Certainly no natural explanation in terms of what has gone before can be given. Perhaps no reason can be given for this novel emergence of a new quality in the life of man. "But there is more in the universe than reason and no one can fully rationalize experience. We ourselves are more than intelligence, we are active agents and the activity of will cannot be fully stated in terms of "reason". The theory of evolution is also in line with the view of spiritual development as here-in stated. The emergent evolution of **Lyold Morgon** also points in the same direction.

If we take this view of freedom that man can occasionally express himself in ways which are quite novel and disconnected with the previous experience, it cannot be reconciled with the idea that God knows the past, the present, and the future equally well.

We have used the word occasionally because it is very seldom that a man asserts his freedom, for the most part we drift along the currents of our past experience and in such a case we cannot claim to be free responsible beings. But when a man asserts his freedom, it is as difficult to account for it rationally as it is when a man falls in love with a certain maid.

If a man can initiate in the future an action totally disconnected with the past for that is what we mean when we say that a man has acted freely, how can God know it

before the action has actually come to pass? If God already knows that a certain action will be done in a certain way in the future, it simply means that the action is thoroughly pre-determined, though the individual in his ignorance, knows it not. Freedom becomes an illusion, merely another name for ignorance. We think that if the freedom of man is to be kept in tact and not submerged under the universal law, of causal determination we shall have to sacrifice the view of complete omniscience. Of course. He knows the future of the evolution of matter as well as the future development of lower animals; but when we come to free human beings, we shall have to say, in all humiliation, that God does not know the future of their evolution so well as the past and the present. It only means that he does not know what it is impossible to know. *Just as God can remain omnipotent without having the power of doing absurd things, he can similarly be regarded as omniscient without having the knowledge of things which it is impossible even for God to know.*

God as Omnipresent—The idea of God as Omnipresent, implies a high mental development. Men of lower level of intelligence regard him as localized in certain place which become sacred on account of divine association. Monothiesm brings with it the idea of God as omnipresent. In the numerous Vedic texts we have this idea of omnipresence dwelt upon in different ways, and in a most clear and convincing manner.

A religious devotee wants to realize the presence of God every where. It is a great solace to him to think that nothing can be concealed from God since he is present every where. Only an omnipresent God can be a guarantee, that order and harmony would be uninterruptedly maintained in the physical as well as the moral world.

We must, however, try to have a correct understanding of the attribute of Omnipresence. When we say that He is present at every point in space, we should not infer therefrom

that he is spatially extended. The Omnipresence of God means that his activity reaches all atoms and even the internal parts of the atoms. He is spiritually present everywhere and not spatially. Only a material body can exist spatially. We often hear that God is present in the soul because it is more refined or *suksham* than the latter. When we talk of subtle and gross white referring to spiritual substances, we are always liable to misinterpretation. *Suksham* and *sthula* can be more aptly applied to material bodies than to spiritual existences.

Two spiritual substances can inter-penetrate each other, but two material atoms cannot do so, that is, they cannot occupy the same space. God is present in the soul, not because one is more refined than the other but for the reason that both are spiritual substances. Similarly one has an equal right to say that the souls exist in God.

God is present everywhere, because he makes his working felt everywhere. He has not to traverse from one point in space to another point in space. We have already seen that he transcends the spatial and the temporal order. Just as a human soul is diffused throughout the body, God is similarly present in the whole universe and even beyond it. But when you begin to talk in spatial terms, you miss the soul in every part of the body. Is it present in the lungs, or the ear, or the brain or in the stomach, the legs or in any other part of the body? If you talk in this way. You will find it nowhere, and yet it is present throughout the body. According to some writers it is even present outside, in those objects of which it is conscious. Just as it is present in the body, it is similarly present in the picture which I am seeing at this time. We do not want to discuss this view at present. What we want to emphasise is the fact that when talking of God as omnipresent we should not fall under the illusion of spatial terms, which would always give us a false view, unless we interpret them rightly.

God as Ethical—We have so far discussed the non-

ethical attributes of God. We have found that God is Omnipotent. A question may be asked at this stage. "Does his power work for the good? Is he a righteous and just God? If God is not righteous, he is absolutely useless for the religious consciousness. His Omnipotence, instead of being a blessing would be an undiluted curse upon humanity. A righteous God is a necessary postulate of a religious consciousness. We are not at this stage concerned with the postulates of religion. We are to see whether the facts of our experience warrant us in drawing any such conclusion, or in other words whether the righteousness of God can be rationally established.

In the first place, it is said that morality is peculiarly a human phenomenon. Good implies the existence of evil, and it is realised by a constant warfare against temptations and other vicious elements in human nature. Good is an acquisition and not a natural state of the soul. If you say that God is good, it means that there is an evil element in him against which he is constantly struggling. A righteous man is he who always triumphs over evil. Should we understand God to be righteous in the same sense? There is some confusion here in the application of the category of good, to the divine personality. Of course it is true that we cannot apply the term good in connection with God in the same sense in which we apply it to man. Man endeavours to attain perfection. God is already perfect. In the case of man, good is an acquisition, the result of slow determined efforts. God is good from the beginning, we cannot speak of God as developing into good from a previous incomplete or bad state. It is said that good requires evil to oppose itself to, and the greater the opposition, the greater is the magnitude of the triumph obtained by the victory of good over evil. A habitually righteous man is he, who performs good and pious acts as a matter of course, whose evil nature has been so completely subdued to the good in him, that it hardly makes itself felt.

We all know that virtue grows easy by practice. We can imagine a state of righteousness, which is free from all elements of struggle, pain and evil and which works as promptly and as inevitably as natural impulses work in the case of ordinary human beings. There can be no difficulty in imagining God as a being who is perfectly righteous without requiring any evil principle to stimulate his inherent goodness.

A man who looks impartially and, without any bias at the constitution of the world, will unfailingly notice the presence of a moral order according to which virtue has the inherent power to secure an eventual triumph over the forces of evil; evil is a hydra-headed monster and shows itself in many forms. It often presents a very stubborn resistance to virtue and righteousness. But in spite of all these difficulties, justice and right win in the end. Sometimes the faith of a religious man is surely tried when he comes across glaring instances of wickedness flourishing and virtue rolling in the dust. On account of our limitations we cannot understand completely all the factors involved in the occurrence of an event. But if the reading of History is correct and there is no reason to doubt it, selfishness and licentious gluttony have invariably met with an evil fate, sooner or later. Selfishness cannot be consistently carried out. It is the principle of disintegration in the moral world. The existence of the moral world therefore leads to the conviction that the power which rules is a benevolent and righteous power, so that the ends of wickedness and injustice are always defeated whatever the case may be. Our human vision may sometimes not be able to follow the course of a wicked career down to the ultimate end. It is therefore natural that we should be sometimes filled with distrust and mis-apprehension as regards the moral government of the universe. A wider and comprehensive outlook, however dispels these doubts and suspicions.

Most people hold the belief that God, merciful and benevolent as he is, forgives the sins of men, if they approach him in a sincerely repentant mood. And a question is sometimes asked as how to reconcile the grace, or mercy of God with His Justice. Justice demands that a man should be visited with pain and suffering in exact proportion to the enormity of his sin, while divine mercy consists in letting a sinner go, without meting out to him the punishment that he deserves. Those who speak in this way, are quite ignorant of the working of mental laws. When a deed has been done, the effect of that deed is permanently registered in the nervous system in the form of mental disposition. The laws of mental life work as inevitably and as necessarily as the physical laws of the external world. *Just as no miracles are possible in the physical world, similarly no forgiveness is possible in the mental world.* The evil effects can be removed by the active efforts of the agent concerned. God can, of course put the erring soul under conditions where the eradication of evil tendencies may be actualized. This may truly be called an act of mercy or grace on the part of God, if you so like to call it. But this grace or mercy of God is always working without any check or interruption. God in his infinite mercy is always helping in the evolution of souls to their ultimate destinies.

Just as the belief that God can perform miracles shows a lower stage of mental culture, similarly the belief that God can forgive sins, indicates that the man who makes the assertion is quite ignorant of the laws of mental life. Increased knowledge of modern psychology is fast dissipating this view.

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Chapter - 8

FAITH AT LAST

Faith and reason—We have already in a brief manner dealt with, the relation between faith and reason. We have found that knowledge and faith supplement each other in the task of understanding the nature of reality. Reason is the first to guide the way, but it cannot go beyond certain heights. It cannot breathe freely in the rarefied atmosphere of higher attitudes. Faith comes to our aid, where reason fails. At the same time we must remember that true faith cannot grow unless the ground is already prepared for it by the active efforts of reason. Reason, if made the sole organ of knowing reality, is sure to lead to agnosticism and atheism sooner or later. Faith, similarly, if not properly grounded on reason, degenerates into supersition and ignorance.

The main task of reason is to discover interrelations between the various facts of experience. The relations, thus discovered are put in the form of general laws, and these laws are found to be universally applicable to similar phenomena under the same conditions. Reason thus articulates the separate bits of experience into one coherent system. It discovers uniformity and order in the midst of confusion. The conception of nature, which science gives us, is that of an organic whole, in which the several parts are interconnected and collectively work in the interests of the whole.

The idea of knowledge is to get a rational insight into the working of nature as a whole, and to demonstrate, as

clearly as possible, that every element in experience is connected with every other element in a most coherent manner. Its aim is to construct a complete map of reality in which every event may be shown as organically related to every other event, in which there may be left no dark or obscure corner, unilluminated and unexplained. Yet it can be easily seen that such an ideal is impossible to realize. We cannot imagine a time when science would have advanced so far as to offer a complete rational explanation of each and every event in the world and to show its connection with other events taking place simultaneously or subsequently. We do not think science would ever be in a position to explain the connection between the falling of a leaf and the death of a man, occurring ten years after the event. In spite of the fact that science cannot establish universal connections in every part of reality *the assumption that nature is an organic whole in which all parts are interrelated, is one of the most cherished articles of faith of a scientist.* It is a postulate, without which he cannot proceed a single step. He has not proved nor will he ever be able to prove that every event in nature is connected with every other event, and yet he believes in it in a most devoted manner. What is it if not faith? Does not a scientist start with the faith that nature is an organic unity and ends with the same faith enriched and reinforced by experience. Is not the faith the beginning and end, the alpha and omega of human existence? Can we embark upon any activity unless we have an initial faith that it would lead to a desired goal? The faith may have to be changed in the light of later experience and nobody claims that faith is constant and invariable. It forms as much a part of human life as reason. We cannot imagine any human being totally destitute of faith. It is found that most men, who do not believe in God, believe at the same time in most ludicrous and absurd doctrines which they cannot substantiate but in

which they believe nevertheless.

And yet faith cannot stand upon its own legs. It is a fact that we believe in many things, before we reason about them. In the course of mental growth, belief comes prior to reasoning. As soon as, howsoever we arrive at the self conscious stage or the stage of reflection, we make haste to justify rationally all our cherished beliefs. Belief and reason cannot remain divorced from each other for a long time. Beliefs have to justify themselves at the bar of reason. After reason has tested a belief, the relation is reversed. From a judge it becomes a humble devotee and a tent bearer of the faith which it has subjected to a searching criticism. Reason begins to work in the interests of the belief that has emerged unscorched in the test.

The work of reason is laborious, it has to painfully find its way in the tangled maze of irrelevant circumstances before it can arrive at the solution of a problem. Its method is discursive, it proceeds from one point to another and in this way, establishes a systematic view of reality. Faith grasps reality in one stretch of imagination. Its method is not analytical, like that of science. It is intuitive. Its aim is to penetrate to the inner meaning that lies embedded beneath the outer strata of experience. Faith wants to discover the worth or value of existence. There is a great difference between the attitude of science and that of faith. Science or reason is interested in facts as they are. It also discovers the relations between the facts and its point of view is impersonal and universal. Faith on the other hand aims at finding out the worth of those facts and stands in a more intimate and personal relation to the self of man than knowledge.

The necessity that urges a man of faith is not merely theoretical but practical. Faith is not satisfied with a bare presentation of the phenomena of the world; it wants to be at home in the world and to read the events of the world

from a spiritual point of view. Science takes no account of the spiritual aspirations of man. It simply passes them by. A man of faith prizes them most highly. He believes that the heart of reality is spiritual. Love and righteousness are the governing principles of the world. If there were no righteousness and justice, the human world at least would be annihilated in a moment. A man of faith does not come to this conclusion, as a result of logical induction from the observed facts of the universe. He is himself a spiritual being, he believes that the religious values and aspirations, which are so essential to his own soul and to the meaning of the world, and which he wants to realize, are not mere fictions, got up by his imagination. They indicate the presence of a supreme being who is the source of the material and the moral world, and the basis of harmony between the two. It is no doubt an act of faith. But does it go against reason? or does reason gradually lead up to this stage of conviction? If faith sets its face against the well established laws of science, it is no longer worth its salt. Such a faith cannot last long. It must eventually lose its hold upon mankind and disgracefully retire into oblivion. I have already indicated above, that sciences cannot do without the ultimate faith that nature is an organic unity. This faith is a great source of inspiration, to the scientists. Science is every day discovering more and more of order and design in nature. The achievements of science instead of proving any positive hinderance to religious faith are on the other hand offering a most timely help to a philosopher, who wants to deduce the existence of God from the facts of design and order. Science is now a days the ally of religion and not its enemy. People believe in God because they require him very badly for their spiritual welfare. It is the inner longing of the heart. People believed in Him before there were any arguments forthcoming to prove his existence. But man being rational.

cannot remain contented unless he can give a rational justification of his faith. Reason though it does not endanger faith in God, can, however, shatter it to pieces, if faith does not accomodate itself to the ever increasing mass of natural knowledge. Faith must therefore be always on its guard. It cannot flout reason with impunity at its own peril.

The values of life—Human activities are directed to various ends. The satisfaction that we anticipate or actually get from the realization of those ends, is the measure of value, contained in those ends. A deliberate purposive life would be impossible without the recognition of value in the objects, desired by an individual. Of course, all activities have their roots in the instinctive life of man. There is a multitude of impulses and instincts, implanted in us by nature, that urge us on to exhibit our energy in various ways. But the truth remains that what we call deliberate action, takes into account the value or satisfaction involved in the act, before it is actually proceeded with.

Value plays a great part in man's life. Different objects give different amounts of satisfaction and we evaluate them higher or lower accordingly. Man is a worshipper of values. He desires things on account of their value. Every object can be looked at from the point of view of its origin or from that of its value. It goes without saying that the latter standpoint is more important for all practical purposes. The question of origin may occupy a scientist, but the question of value is essential for all of us.

These values can be arranged in a graduated scale of importance. Wealth, physical health, knowledge, beauty, love, courage, are so many objects of value. They do not hold the same position on the scale. When there is a clash between health and wealth, wealth is generally sacrificed in the interests of health. Similarly, from a spiritual point of view, a righteous life devoted to goodness is superior to a life of

knowledge, and knowledge holds a higher position than physical efficiency. Sometimes opinions differ as to whether precedence should be given to beauty or to knowledge. When we talk of values as higher and lower, we must clearly understand that even the higher value, when taken in exclusion from others, cannot make a perfect life. A well ordered and balanced life must have all the elements of perfection, harmonised into a complete whole. Righteousness is superior to knowledge, and knowledge is higher than physical health. But a perfect life should contain all the three elements in a well proportioned combination. The value of goodness and beauty and knowledge is not recognised at a lower level of mental culture. Physical power and worldly eminence are greater sources of attraction than the other values. Gradually spirit asserts its claims over matter. Spiritual attainments are prized more dearly than temporal power and material possessions. A life, free from passion and fear, devoted to truth and righteousness in a spirit of independence and disinterestedness exerts a powerful fascination on men of deep culture and discerning understanding.

These values can be known only through being experienced. How can you convince a man of the value of love, beauty and righteousness unless he can apprehend them by way of intuition. As you cannot make a blind man see, you cannot similarly, bring home to the spiritually blind people, the appreciation of the value of beauty and love. The taste of a pudding lies in the eating thereof. If a man is entirely devoid of the aesthetic sentiment, he can never understand or appreciate beauty, in spite of your best efforts to make him do so. The values are a matter of personal realization. These values are found and enjoyed by us rather than rationally apprehended. Reason cannot make us to discern these values. It can compare the values one with the

other, pass judgments upon them, but you must have something to start with, by way of intuition, before you deal with it in a rational manner.

Reason, no where plays the primary role. Even in Science where reason, seems to be at its best, it can begin its work, after facts have been accumulated by direct observation. Its function is to compare, to judge and to find relations between various facts. But you cannot compare or judge; unless there are facts to be compared, judged or related to one another. Reason cannot create facts from itself. Experience, is every where presupposed, in the construction of reason. Just as the facts of the material world have to be directly apprehended, without the intervention of reason, similarly the values, such as justice, beauty, love and order, are a matter of personal apprehension.

There is a difference in the point of view of reason and of value. "The ideal of reason is coherent thinking and the ideal of value is harmonious living". For that reason, value is more personal than reason. Value is the non-rational element in the life of men. It is this non-rational element that is the source of joy and happiness. Joy always comes from a sense of right living, and the sense of right living comes from a right appreciation of values.

These values are objective and universal. They are not the subjective experience of a single individual. They have an objective existence. They exist not because I apprehend them. Our ideals of value seem to rule in the experienced world of which we form a part. Beauty, order, harmony, truth, and love form a universal aspect of the animate and inanimate nature. Where should these values come from? They cannot come from matter. They unmistakably point to the ultimate ground of things, who is the fountain head of all that is noble, true and valuable. How can you otherwise explain the existence of these values? Human beings do not create them.

They simply participate in them, and make them their own. They lose themselves, so to speak, in the universal aspect of things. Eucken, the well known philosopher of Germany, is the modern apostle of the objectivity of spiritual value. The life of the spirit is present universally in nature, and the work of life is measured by the extent to which it participates in this omnipresent spiritual existence. A wise man discerns the presence of the spirit in the running water in the rustling of leaves and the singing of birds. The cult of a man of faith is, that wherever you come across, beauty, joy, love, and justice, there you see God face to face. These values are the out-standing landmarks that guide a man to the presence of the Universal Spirit.

The pragmatic test—According to the pragmatic theory, the truth of a certain belief can be judged from the consequences that arise from the holding of that belief. What is the practical value of the belief that claims to be true? Does it lead to satisfactory results in actual experience? Let us apply this pragmatic test to the belief in God. If the belief in God leads to the greater efficiency and harmony of life, it is true, otherwise false. The pragmatic criterion of truth, although not the sole and the complete criterion in itself, is sometimes valuable specially in religion where deeper spiritual experiences are concerned. "A faith which enables religious men to overcome the evil and victoriously to bear the burden and heat of life's day, is in process of verifying itself." It is no doubt true that religious doctrines can grow into personal convictions, by being continuously tested and acted upon in life. It is not enough that you should give assent to a belief, you should also feel its truth in every pore of your body, and this profound conviction of the truth of a doctrine can be produced only, if satisfactory results accrue by adapting it and acting upon it as the daily principle of life. If a certain belief has worked continuously for good it

must evidently be in harmony with the nature of man and the requirements of the world in which we live.

While we can subscribe to the formula "all that is true works", we cannot, however, logically pass to its reverse "all that works is true." Moreover there is a special danger in making the subjective experience of man as the measure of truth. Truth no longer remains objective and universal, it becomes equivalent to opinion that may be rejected at any moment. We also know, as a matter of historical experience, that many doctrines that were held true at one time, ceased to be regarded as such when the circumstances changed, and new social ideas came to occupy men's minds. But as we have said above, if a certain belief has un-interruptedly worked for good over a wide range of space and time, its claim to truth, becomes considerably strengthened. Truth is not merely theoretical in its constitution. It must also have a practical bearing upon a man's life. It must affect it for the better. If a certain belief, has all along produced good and satisfactory results it must have an element of truth in it. Sometimes a man affirms a belief to be true, because he is emotionally satisfied with it. Such a man, when confronted with hostile evidence which he cannot refute, takes refuge in the inner verdict of his feeling. He believes in it, because he feels it to be true. The testimony of feeling and emotion, cannot provide any objective standard of truth in religion. When, however, the verdict of inner feeling is confirmed by the actual results of the holding of that belief in the practical life of man, we get nearer to the truth of doctrine concerned. This pragmatic criterion, however useful it may be, cannot give a complete and final test of truth of religion, unless it is proved to be grounded on reason, and co-herent with all the elements of our experienced world. The pragmatice test, draws our attention to the important fact that while estimating the truth of religious faith, we must not ignore the

consequences to which it leads in actual practice.

The insufficiency of intellect—Intellect, however, cannot have the last word in religion. Thought is incompetent to understand God, who is the basis of thought itself. In the *Upanishads* the idea of the insufficiency of intellect is clearly brought out. We read in the *Kena Upanishad* "That which one cannot think with the mind, but that by which, they say the mind is made to think, know that alone be *Brahma*." Our intellect cannot transcend the categories of time, space and causality. We must think of objects in time or in space or causally related to other objects. We cannot on the intellectual plane, bring ourselves to a point of view, completely free from these categories of thought. But God is beyond them. Space cannot hold Him, time cannot limit Him, and though He is the efficient cause of the universe, He Himself is without a cause. When contemplating about Him, we meet with infinity all round and so get bewildered. Our intellect wants the beginnings of things. We, on the other hand come across an endless cycle of creations and destructions that go on eternally. We cannot envisage the process in its complete form. It is beyond the power of thought. Intellect is constitutionally unfit to grasp the infinite, and here infinity meets us at every step. Thought can give us only partial, incomplete pictures of reality. According to the *Upanishads*, thought should become transformed into intuition before we can have any glimpse of the Absolute. It is realization or *Anubhava* that counts and not mere intellectual comprehension. Bergson in modern times has laid great emphasis on the method of intuition as the only true method of knowing reality. Intellect gives us side glimpses and does not take us into the heart of the throbbing and living reality. Hindoo Philosophy recognises the need of attaining the faculty of divine intuition, for without it spiritual discernment is not possible. The *Yoga* system has

for its mission, the inculcating of a practical discipline by which a seeker after Divine Knowledge may be gradually brought to a level when he may have a direct realization of the supreme spiritual value. When the stand-point of intuition is attained, all riddles are solved and difficulties overcome. The *Upnishads* require us to lay aside our pride of intellect before venturing into the spiritual realm of divine joy and harmony. "Let him not seek after many words for that is mere weariness of tongue", so says the *Brihadaranyak Upanishad*. A man should cultivate childlike simplicity before entering into the Kingdom of God. We have a Vedic text in which the hollowness of the claims of reason to reach any positive results concerning the nature of God is shown in a very quaint manner. We can simply say "It is not this! It is not this" as long as we are on the intellectual plane. Intellect cannot exhaust the attributes of the Divine Being. Again sometimes contradictory attributes are predicated about God to show that the intellectual categories cannot completely cover all aspects of Divinity. We read in the *Isa Upanishad*, "It moves; It does not move; It is far and It is near. It is within all this and without all this". He is in some other *Upanishad* described as "Subtler than the Subtle and Greater than the Great."

It would be wrong to conclude from this that intuition and intellect are opposed to each other. Intellect is perfected in intuition. The state of realization cannot be described in words, it cannot be argued upon. It is matter of direct experience. We often come across the unedifying spectacle of the theologians tearing themselves to pieces over the question of the existence of God. Do these people know God? The answer of the *Upanishads* is an emphatic "No." The stage of intellectual comprehension is a necessary stage, but it is only a stage and must be transcended. If you are satisfied with your intellectual knowledge of God and do not advance

further, you will not attain to peace and harmony, which should naturally come to a seeker after Divine Union. The *Upanishads* therefore inculcate the necessity of Divine realization which alone can give rest to an aching heart. When a man has reached such a state, he loses all fear. Passion flees from him, and ineffable joy and ecstasy are diffused over his entire being.

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Chapter - 9

GOD AND WORSHIP

What is worship?—We have found in the last chapter, that rational faith is the flower that grows on the stem of religious reflection. Intellect completes itself in faith. Faith is the perfection and the natural resting place of intellectual activity. A man of faith rises above all puzzles and doubts. The presence of the divine being is a matter of direct intuition. It permeates his whole being. There grows up a personal and intimate relation between him and the absolute. The God is no longer a colourless content of subjective thought. He is the object of adoration. The devotee consecrates his life at the feet of the Lord. His effort, from day to day, is to merge his finite personality into the perfect being of God. At certain times, when the feeling of kinship becomes highly accentuated, he may cry out in the divine ecstasy. "Thou and I are one." It is the expression of a complete sense of union and kinship. It is fundamentally an act of identifying one's will with the supreme will of the lord, "Thy will be done" is the motto, which a religious man adopts as the guiding principle of his life. There is an impassable gulf between this aspiration for divine union and the metaphysical theory that we have dealt with at some length previously that human soul and God are actually one and the preception of difference is the result of ignorance or illusion. There is no connection between these two stand-points. While the former point of view is perfectly justifiable and natural, the later is a gross misinterpretation of the nature of reality.

The attitude of worship is an inseparable aspect of religious faith. A living faith spontaneously bursts forth in adoration and prayer. Worship which consists in the dedication of the soul to the Divine is an essential element in religion. A worthy and noble life is a life of aspirations. They religious man aspires after the ideal values. The evanescent and ephemeral experience of sensual gratification loses all charm and fascination and its place is taken by the spiritual longing and aspiration for the realization of the highest good in one's own life. The highest good is identical with God himself. He is the embodiment of goodness, beauty and truth. He is the source of all that is best and noblest in this world. Divine worship, therefore, is the opening of one's soul to Divine influences. It is an effort for the entire transformation of personality. It is an act of dedication which means that we have given up the narrow, selfish, egoistic point of view, and adapted instead, the universal point of view. A devotee empties his soul of all chaff and impurities, of false and narrow ideals and evil habits, and thenceforward the aim of his life consists in realizing and actualizing the aspiration for the highest object of desire. The highest object of desire, as we have already indicated, is God, who is the personification of the highest values of existence. *God is infinite love, infinite joy, infinite knowledge and infinite power.* The aspiration for divine union takes the form of a desire for participation in the eternal values that God embodies in Himself. Let us understand clearly as to what we mean when we talk of spiritual development. It is the evolution of the spirit in the line of the highest values. A spiritual man is full of unbounded love and ineffable joy. He is a man of profound knowledge and unconquerable power. His soul is illumined by truth and universal love. The stage of fear and sensuous attachment is transcended and the expression of perfect freedom becomes the usual and normal

attitude of mind. It is the possession of these values which is the goal of a seeker after spirituality. We worship God because he is the personal embodiment of these values which are the object of our aspiration, or in other words, we aspire after these attributes because they are embodied in the divine being whose presence is felt as diffused universally in every point of space and beyond.

The very fact that a man has taken to worship clearly indicates that his soul is feeling discontented with the narrow and false ideals of life and is gradually though feebly pushing upwards 'like buried shoots, towards the sunlight.' It shows the birth of new vision of life, a vision that would gradually lead a man to the etherial regions of divine joy, love and beauty. Sometimes these spiritual stirrings are accompanied by an actue sense of discontentment. We would like to call it divine discontentment. It only marks the line of demarcation between the old life and the new, which however is not yet completely born, hence the pangs of labour which are inevitable, when something novel and important is going to be ushered into the world.

The different stages of worship—The first stage is that of adoration or *Stuti*. It is a homage paid to God for his infinite love and infinite power. Adoration stands for the highest degree of love that we feel towards the source of beauty, truth and goodness. These attributes evoke love and respect wherever they are found. We respect a person whose heart is full of love and goodness. Similarly our head bows down in reverence when we come in contact with a man of wisdom, who has deep learning and who possesses an insight into the truth of reality. Beauty also engenders into the mind of spectators, a feeling of love and self dedication. Beauty, love and knowledge are sources of joy and reverence whenever they are met with. This sentiment of adoration finds the highest and the intensest expression, when we

contemplate the idea of Godhead, where the attributes mentioned above, appear at their best and in their most transcendental forms. Tired and dissatisfied with the things of the worlds we turn with a sigh of relief to the creator of this world, who is the fulfilment of the highest aspirations of man. At such a time of divine illumination, it is but natural that the soul of a man should burst forth into a song of praise to the loving and the benevolent God. While adoring God, we are as it were, enraptured with the beatific vision. Our mind constantly dwells on the bright reverence inspiring attributes of the divinity. We surrender our whole being, so to speak, to the purifying influences of Divine presence. Adoration and love go side by side. We meet with this phenomenon even in human relationships. How much do we dwell on the qualities of the person whom we love? To a lover, his sweet heart is perhaps the most beautiful and most virtuous being alive on earth. He contemplates her beauty and her virtues when he is alone, or talks about them when he can find a friend, near at hand, ready to listen to his love-inspired discourse.

Stuti or adoration, therefore consists in dwelling on the attributes of God. The effect of adoration is an unconscious assimilation of these characteristics into our own life. The more we contemplate the higher ideals as embodied in God, the more, do our souls get tinged and impregnated with the germ of divine perfection and harmony. Adoration is therefore the first stage in worship. We are required to meditate on God's attributes so intensely as to create a spiritual atmosphere, enveloping our souls in a complete manner.

The second stage is the stage of *Prarthana* or prayer. It comes next to adoration. When the idea of divine perfection has taken a complete possession of our souls, we naturally fall into an attitude of prayer. What we appreciate in others,

we want to have for ourselves too. Prayer is the desire of the heart finding an external expression. The relation of the devotee to the supreme being is a highly personal relation. He can think of him as his master or his friend, according to the stage of spiritual development that he has reached. Under the loving influence of this personal relationship, he may often address him, as a child addresses his parent, desiring the possession of those attributes, the contemplation of which has fascinated him so completely, in the idea of the Divine Being.

Here we give two or three Mantras from the Vedas, which contain prayers and addressed to God, and which would also give an idea of the kind of objects, we should pray for.

(1) Oh Brightness personified God, Out of Thy infinite grace, bestow on me wisdom and rational insight, which are so highly desired by men of noble and purified souls.

(2) Thou art effulgence, and light personified. Bestow light on me. Thou art infinite power. Give that unconquerable power to me also. Thou hast unlimited prowess and might. Thy indignation falls on the wicked and the selfish, let me also have a share of that righteous indignation. Thou art full of forbearance. Give me the quality of calmly forbearing hardships and calamities.

It is the firm conviction of the devotee, that God is ever ready to help him in the realization of the prayers, if they proceed from the depths of the heart. But a man should not set up his own will against the will of God. If a man prays for the fruition of his selfish propensities as against the good of others, he invokes the help of God, as it were, for the propagation of evil in all its forms. He wants to make God, an accomplice in the furtherance of his wicked and evil designs. Such prayers can only emanate from a man, who has got a distorted and absurd idea of the nature of God-

head. God is for the promotion of all that is true, noble, good and beautiful and our prayers to God should embody desires directed to the realization of eternal values. Similarly it would be quite foolish to supplicate God for miraculous intervention in the established order of nature. The whole idea of worship is completely misunderstood when people pray for objects which are in direct opposition to the fixed laws of the physical and mental phenomena. The best form of prayer is that in which we do not prescribe our own preferences for the benefit of God but on the other hand, surrender ourselves completely to the superior will of God who is infinitely wiser than we are, Let us desire to make God's will our own. Let us pray to God for those things which he thinks best for us.

Does prayer do any good? In the first place we are to remember that it is as natural to pray as it is to love, though perhaps the latter is more common than the former. We find the phenomenon of prayer universal amongst all races of mankind, in some form or other. Prayer is an element of savage life, same way it is an element of civilized life. It is no doubt true that the professed materialists and atheists try to eliminate the aspect of praying from their lives. They have no diety whom they should pray to. I have not met any athiest in my life and so have not been able to get a direct acquaintance with his mentality. But I am sure, under the stress of exceptional hardship and unbearable pain, even an atheist is likely to curse the order of nature in which he is born and that brings him so much pain and sulfering. We often curse inanimate objects, when we regard them as living and personal and forget for the time being that the object of our heedless curses is impersonal and lifeless. Behind the curse, there is always a masked desire, almost a nascent prayer that things should have been different from what they are. The curse of a pessimist or an atheist is an inverted prayer, prayer that has begun from the wrong end. I would not like

to confuse the readers with psychological justification. I know however of a sect of Atheists who call themselves *Dev Samajists*. They positively and vociferously deny God. They however regard, the founder of thier sect, as a perfect being and as the best sample of humanity. They worship and pray to their religious preceptor just as other people offer prayers to God. Prayer, confiscated from God, is most loyally offered to the so called perfect man on earth. In the eighteenth century, Comte who did not believe in God started a new religion of humanity in France, and raised altars to this new goddess. His disciples used to assemble at these altars and go through a number of religious ceremonies, which were not in any way widely different from the ceremonies of those who worship God. What I am trying to drive at, is the fact that prayer is a universal phenomenon. It may, for the time being, be ignored or suppressed by artificial efforts. It cannot however be altogether suppressed and so it keeps showing itself in one form or the other. In the case of a man of faith, prayer assumes the most prominent and direct form, since he believes in a divine being, to whom the prayers can be addressed.

Thus it is clear that prayer is almost common amongst all mankind. Specially if a man is a believer in God, he must pray also. One follows the other. The two cannot be divorced from each other. The question can be put however, "Does it do any good? Prayer, if it is offered in the right spirit, does have a lasting impression on the human mind. The man, who prays with sincere conviction and keen longing, becomes transformed for the time-being, and if prayers are offered every day at regular times, the cumulative effect of daily communion, becomes immense. We must remember that prayer, has for its objective, the spiritual elevation of the praying individual. To pray for worldly prosperity and material possessions is no prayer at all. The effect of the

prayer on the spiritual life of a person, will be better understood if we take an analogy from another sphere. An hour's walk on a certain day in pure atmosphere, may not do any appreciable good to the health of an individual; but if the walk is continued from day to day, it would have a very invigorating influence on his health. Similarly prayer, if offered regularly, would inevitably have a beneficial effect on the spiritual life of a man.

One other fact is also to be borne in mind. While prayer, would have its natural effect, efforts should also be made to actualize the contents of the prayer in practical life. Prayer unsupported by efforts does not effect much. As a matter of fact, prayer, rightly made, would act as an incentive to right action. It would be very silly of a man to imagine that the mere chanting of certain Mantras would automatically open the doors of success. Such people are soon disillusioned. In some cases a great reaction takes place. They begin a regular propaganda in depreciation of prayer. They do not know that their attitude was absolutely wrong from the start to the finish.

Occasionally we find ourselves unable to get into the right mood of praying. Our minds are not calm and settled. Different irrelevant ideas crowd upon us and distract our attention from prayer. In such cases it would be helpful before beginning to pray to take in five or six deep breaths in the open air. Slowly inhale the air to the full capacity of your lungs and then as slowly exhale it, through the nostrils. The "Om" or a similar significant word should also be chanted for a minute or so and generally this initial preparation does put a man in the right mood of concentration. The chanting of hymns, also, helps in the concentration of mind.

The third stage is that of *Upasana* or communion. Normally individuals of average capacities do not go beyond the two stages already indicated. The stage of communion is the final stage when a man, bent upon having a direct

realization of divine presence, undergoes certain course of discipline. The stage of *Upasana* is entered upon by those, who make God-realization the chief aim of their lives. The first two stages are preparatory to the third. When a man has successfully traversed the third stage, he finds unexpected moral and intellectual powers swelling up from within. As a rule, we habitually use a very small part of the powers that we possess. On certain occasions, when we are greatly excited, or when we are in the grip of a strong emotion, such as anger, love, or despair, we are surprised to find ourselves exhibiting unusual energy and accomplishing marvellous things which might have appeared quite impracticable under ordinary circumstances. Chronic bed-ridden sufferers, have been found, leaving their beds under the influence of strong emotion and doing things which are no less than miraculous. It is also a notorious fact that a single successful effort, such as saying no to some habitual temptation, will keep a man into a higher level of power for days and weeks. We have the instance of a drunkard who under the influence of a sudden impulse, broke his bottle of whisky and did not feel tempted to drink for two months. Generally we get into the habit of being tired very soon. If we however persevere exact greater energy from our bodies, we shall in course of time become adapted to the new level of power and we shall feel equally comfortable under new conditions of additional labour. We generally do not push our faculties to their extreme use. It is also a common experience that when we begin some work, we feel cold and apathetic in the beginning, but we soon get warmed up. After working usual number of hours, we begin to feel fatigue, but if we continue even after that, we are surprised to find, on most occasions, that we become fresher than ever. We seem to have great reserves of energy stored up in our organism, and it is very seldom that we draw upon all the resources at our disposal. Emotions and

excitements, as we have found, sometimes give us a glimpse of these vast resources, but they do not work continuously, and therefore this store of energy under ordinary circumstances cannot be drawn upon at will. We have to wait till abnormal conditions should accidentally occur and help the manifestation of the stored up energy.

We have, however, in the system of *Yoga*, a methodical discipline by means of which the powers of mind are indefinitely increased to a higher pitch of efficiency. We are personally not in a position to say much about the system. An evidence, however coming from a most eminent psychologist of America, **William James**, may be cited in this connection. According to him the Hindu *Yoga* System is the best of all the methodical disciplines devised for the training of mind to a higher pitch of efficiency. It invariably leads to strength of character, personal power, and unshakability of soul. He then quotes the instance of a friend of his who had undergone the *Yogic* training. **James** found a wonderful transformation in the character of the friend. "He has undergone material trials with indifference, travelled third class in Mediterranean steamers and fourth class in African trains, living with the poorest Arab and sharing their unaccustomed food with equanimity. A profound modification had unquestionably occurred in the running of **his mental machinery**." **James** then says that his will has become almost unconquerable. There is no temptation which he cannot withstand successfully and his powers of application and perseverance have increased to a miraculous extent.

But much more is claimed for the system of *Yoga* than the mere increase of moral and intellectual powers. It is no doubt an ascetic discipline, but, as experience shows, it is highly useful in producing that stage of concentration, when direct communion with God become practicable.

We found in the last chapter that intuition is a better organ of divine knowledge than intellect. To obtain the power of intuition, the method of discipline as inculcated in the Yoga system is highly beneficial. We do not mean to assert that no other method is possible. But Yoga practices have stood the test of time and have been reduced to the form of an art, systematised and perfected in every respect.

The third stage of communion, therefore brings a devotee, near the goal of worship, namely God realization. When this stage is reached, ineffable joy fills the soul of man, all temptation and fear leave him, and he can bear the greatest hardship with perfect composure and equanimity. In fact a perfect transformation in moral and spiritual life takes place. Wonderful powers are awakened and the soul finds itself face to face with the blissful region of spiritual values. In the words of **Swami Dayanand**, "*Just as a man trembling with cold becomes warm by going near the fire, similarly all the imperfections and sufferings of a soul are removed when it comes in direct communion with God.*"

It might be added in passing that the daily reading of scriptures is regarded in every religion as a necessary adjunct to prayer. In order that we may dedicate ourselves completely to the highest being we should have a knowledge of the infinite being who is the object of worship. This knowledge comes from the Scriptures. Moreover, our desires for self dedication and worship would become sluggish and even prayer would become stale and uninteresting, if fresh inspiration is not derived every day from the fountainhead of divine knowledge, we must reserve, therefore, some portion of every day, however short, for the reading of sacred books along side with prayer and meditation.

Corporate worship—Beside private worship we should also occasionally participate in collective worship. It

is a well known fact that social participation greatly heightens our emotions and passions of whatever kind they might be. "A public meeting may be moved to enthusiasm, whereby the members of a mob will commit outrages, the men of a regiment will manifest heroism for beyond their moral capacity as individuals." Exactly the same psychological law is applicable to religious enthusiasm as well. When we collect at a certain place, with the avowed purpose of corporate worship, our religious nature is stirred to greater depths than if we had offered our prayers alone. We do not mean to suggest that collective worship should be a daily feature of our life, but there can be no doubt that congregational prayers offered at certain fixed intervals, are productive of the highest good. These prayers, however, which are made on such occasions, should not be too long and should be couched in a simple natural style. If the prayer is too long, the audience is simply bored and a bored audience cannot worship in the right spirit. The intensity of concentration which prayer demands, cannot be maintained for long at a time. He that prays too long, ceases to pray at all. The time, thus saved from prayers should, in individual cases be given to meditation or the contemplation of the attributes of God and the highest end of our aspirations. As far as prayers are concerned, what is wanted is not length but intensity.

Perverted forms of worship.

1. (A) **Image worship**—Those who support idol worship, establish their claim on the plea that it helps concentration. Let us accept their contention. But concentration is not the same thing as divine worship. One can learn concentration by focussing one's attention on a black spot of ink or by looking with fixed attention at any picture. The quality of concentration, acquired in any way, is a valuable asset in life. But is it at all reasonable to assert that those objects that help the act of concentration are equally

instrumental in leading the mind to the contemplation of the divine attributes. A man may be busy in reading a novel or seeing a play with concentrated attention. It would be quite absurd to say that mere absorption in any activity is identical with divine worship.

The idols generally represent gods and goddesses, or heroes of the past who on account of their marvellous achievements, have been exalted in the imagination of the masses. We have the idols of Rama and Krishna, Shiv and Hanuman, of Jesus and Mary. Let us accept the fact that the sight of the images remind the devotee of the noble and exceptional virtues of the great men and thereby he is unconsciously led to their imitation. We must not, however, forget that however great a man may be, his attributes fall infinitely short of and bear no comparison, whatsoever, with the attributes of the divinity. The idea that a worshipper gets of the divine nature by contemplating the lives of heroes and greatmen is a distorted idea. He can never pass from the idea of a finite limited being (and even gods and goddesses have their weaknesses and short-comings) to the idea of an infinite omnipotent, righteous and supreme God. We can derive benefits from the lives of great men, but they are not the desirable objects of worship. We cannot totally surrender ourselves to them. They are human and if we set up human beings, however exalted they might be, as our objects of worship, we in the very act become less than human. We forfeit our right to be free human beings.

As a matter of fact, daily worship of the idols, makes it psychologically impossible to think of the attributes of the gods who are set up for purposes of worship. The objects with which we daily come in contact, become matters of direct apprehension, and we no longer think about their qualities. We seldom think of the attributes of our friends or our relatives with whom we come in hourly contact. In the

same way we generally do not think of the beauty or ugliness of our furniture, unless our attention is drawn to it by the act of comparing it with the furniture of another man. The truth of this statement can be verified by any man who would undertake a slight trouble of introspection. A daily temple goer thinks of nothing but the wooden, the metallic or the paper idol and his mind is filled up, during the time, he is standing before it, with the ideas of the dimensions of the idol, and other concomitant paraphernalia attached to it. In course of time, even these ideas drop from his mind and he comes back from the temple as empty as he enters it. Image worship has been denounced and condemned in a most vehement manner by most of the reformers in all parts of the world. As civilization advances and men become intellectually more enlightened, the superstition of idols gives way to better methods of worship. It is strange that it should never strike the supporters of idol worship that dead inert matter is the least calculated to give an idea of the transcendental attributes of God.

2. (B) Man worship—We have also the curious phenomenon of man worship. It is a sort of religious despotism. We have already mentioned above, that when we begin to worship man, we in the very act become less than human. We become degraded as it were from the sublime purpose of life. *Man worship is the worst form of slavery.* It keeps the body and the mind of a worshipper in perpetual thralldom; it prevents the imagination from soaring into the regions of the infinite. The devotees of the man God take him to be the perfect type of humanity and they can never imagine the possibility of the higher development of character. Man-worship is against the spirit of democracy. It hangs like a miasma on the free soul of man and prevents it from exploring the higher level of spiritual evolution. It is a blight and a curse on humanity and we can never denounce

it too strongly. The sight of a bogus god, offering himself for worship and adoration is most nexious to the healthy consciousness of enlightened humanity. The notion that is most elevating and inspiring is the idea of the brotherhood of man and the fatherhood of God, and man worship cuts at the very root of this healthy idea. It is a satisfaction, however, that as knowledge spreads and right ideas about the dignity of man become known to the people, these superstitions would be automatically exercised from human society.

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About the Author

Not much information is available now about the life and works of Pt. Bahadur Mal, M.A., except that he was a brilliant Professor of philosophy at the erstwhile D.A.V. College, Lahore, and, was highly respected amongst his peers (including luminaries like Pt. Bhagwat Dutt, B.A., of Research Deptt., and Pt. Sri Ram Sharma, M.A., Professor of History, and many others of D.A.V. College, Lahore), as well as his students.

Prof. Bahadur Mal's hold on western and Indian Philosophy was marvellous. The ease with which he quotes Western Philosophers and Scientists in his book *Rational Faith in God*, and, gives excerpts from Vedas, Upanishads and works of Swami Dayananda Saraswati, the founder of illustrious Renaissance movement in India, depicts his grip and thoroughness over the subject.

This book 'RATIONAL FAITH IN GOD' is a classic example of rationality of his ideas and their presentation. It is also a relic of the old Oxfordian English, for which the alumni of Oxford University always used to take pride, and Prof. Bahadur Mal, M.A. is no exception.

Rational Faith in God

“Shradhyā satyam āpyate”—this is a small quote from *Yajurveda* (Mantra-19/30). It means that through faith, the Truth is realised. But to realise the Reality in the real sense, the faith needs to be backed by logic, reasoning and transparent truth. Blind and assumptive faith leads no where. If the faith ignores, rationality, reasoning and truth, it is apt to fall into utter ignorance, fanaticism and superstition.

Rationality gives strength to faith. It is in this light, this book ‘RATIONAL FAITH IN GOD’ needs to be studied.

It needs to be clearly understood that only true knowledge and faith supplement each other in the task of understanding the nature of reality and realisation of God—who alone is all-existence, all-knowing and all-bliss. He is infinite love, infinite joy, infinite knowledge and infinite power.

“Whoever knows the pervading thread (law) in which are interwoven the great objects of the entire universe, and whoever knows the thread of that thread, i.e., the creator of universe, he knows the Great God.”

(*Atharvaveda* 10/8/37)

—Mahatma Gopal Swami Saraswati